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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31ST 2015

THE GEM WISHES OUR READERS AND ADVERTISERS A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR AND ALL GOOD FORTUNE IN 2016

Christmas rain does not put off hardy swimmers!

REPORT by PHILIP IRWIN

AFTER a long run of clear, dry days, the Porthcawl Christmas Swim had to cope with the unpleasant combination of a drizzle and a stiff breeze this year.

It meant a reduction in the number of spectators, but the swimmers were undeterred, with 916 registering to line up and head for the sea.

In fact, as the tide was right out, swimmers had approximately a quarter of a mile walk or run to the sea for their Christmas morning dip at Sandy Bay Porthcawl. Organisers estimated the number of spectators at 2,000.

At 11:45am, Porthcawl Coastguards signalled the start of the parade and cleared a path through the spectators down the beach for the swimmers.

As usual, many were in fancy dress, and they were led by Chris Hughes, who has swum in all the 51 previous 'swims'.

Unfortunately, Chris' fellow veteran lead swimmer, Vic Davies, suffered an injury that meant he had to miss the swim for the first time!

Swimmers from all over the UK and overseas took part, and among the regulars was veteran swimmer Susan Powell from Caldicot, Monmouthshire, who hasn't missed a 'swim' since 1978.

One first time swimmer was 74-year-old Sarah Frith from the Isle of Wight, who took part on the recommendation of her daughter!

The spokesperson for the swim committee, Ian Stroud, said: "We were delighted with the fantastic turn out today, considering the poor weather.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)

This group of swimmers braved the cold and damp on Christmas morning in Porthcawl. PHOTO by GLYN EVANS. (See more pictures on page 7.)

Porthcawl fisherman rescued by lifeboat

PORTHCAWL'S Atlantic 85 lifeboat *Rose of the Shires* was launched recently after a large wave swept a fisherman into the sea.

The wave swept the fisherman from the breakwater into the sea, where he made fruitless attempts to cling on to the pier.

Other fishermen raised the alarm and one threw his fishing tackle box into the sea to offer him something to cling to, but conditions were too rough. He quickly drifted approximately a quarter of a mile offshore.

The RNLI lifeboat launched immediately and the volunteer crew were soon able to locate him, face up in the water. RNLI volunteer Simon Emms then jumped into the water and pulled him safely aboard the lifeboat.

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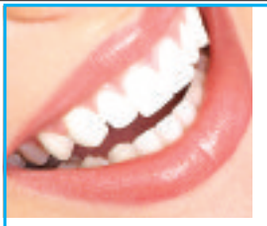
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The GEM's New Year wish

'PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL TOWARDS MEN' is a simple biblical message as pertinent today as it was 2,000 years ago, and one that can be embraced by every human being, of whatever faith – or none.

In a world riven by conflict and brutal acts of terrorism that saw 2015 drawing to a close – not only with natural disasters, but unprecedented scenes of mass migration from countries ravaged by war and repression in the Middle East – it was a message too little heard or heeded – ironically, in the very part of the world where it first gave birth.

At its root, of course, is tolerance and an acceptance that others may have quite a different outlook on life; for without this, 'peace on earth and goodwill towards men' will remain a worthy but fanciful notion trotted out once a year as a seasonal greeting – rather than a universal, everyday ethos for life.

Privileged as we all are in this country to enjoy the benefits of living in a democracy that tolerates freedom of speech, the start of a new year is both a fresh opportunity and an extra responsibility for all men and women of goodwill (and, in particular, those who would be in government), to respect this privilege, and set an example in how to resolve conflict and division by peaceable means.

There will soon be a highly visible test of this close to home, with elections to the Welsh National Assembly which (hopefully) will provide an opportunity to demonstrate this in open but civilised debate – free of vitriolic, personal attacks that have no place in this newspaper's editorial columns and serve only to muddy issues that divide society, rather than resolving them.

This, at least, is The GEM's fervent New Year wish, as 2016 dawns; and one with which we trust all our readers and letter writers (of whatever social or political persuasion) will concur and take note in the turbulent weeks and months ahead.

Between us, we can give a small demonstration that 'peace on earth and goodwill to all men' has not become an empty, modern day slogan – but even after 2,000 years remains a potent antidote to enmity.

Don John
GEM Editor

The Sker WI takes a step back in time on historic visit

ON December 9, 38 members of Sker WI travelled 32 miles and 250 years back in time, when they visited historic Llanelly House in the heart of modern day Llanelli.

In 2003 Llanelly House was one of 10 finalists in the BBC history television series *Restoration*. This was a series that looked at buildings all over Britain that were run-down and in need of restoration following long periods of neglect and lack of financial support. Viewers were asked to vote for the building they felt was most worthy of winning a sum of money to put towards the cost of restoration..

Although Llanelly House, an 18th century Grade I listed Georgian house, didn't win the national competition (it came top out of three properties in Wales!) the public support it received definitely raised the profile of the much needed restoration project

During an enthralling visit, members were shown the rooms that have now been restored to their former 18th century glory. They also enjoyed an interesting interactive history of the house and its former incumbents.

After enjoying the delights of Llanelly House, including the tea room and gift shop, members hurtled back to the 21st century via lunch and shopping in Carmarthen.

Members who visited Llanelly House all agreed that they had had a worthwhile and enjoyable day out and that Llanelly House certainly lived up to its claim of being a place 'Where History Comes to Life!'

Our next meeting will be held at St David's Church Hall at 7pm on Thursday, January 14. Visitors are always welcome, so why don't you pop along and say hello?

Christine Beynon
(club correspondent)

Who wants to build what and where, in Bridgend?

Mr David Bowles – **The Co-Operative Food store, 270 New Road, Porthcawl, Bridgend** – Proposed new signage.

Mrs Margaret Cavaghan – **Ty Maen Cottage, Porthcawl Road, South Cornelly** – Extension to front glazed elevation.

Mr Philip Tovey – **First and second floors, 96 Nolton Street, Bridgend** – Change of use to house in multiple occupation (five bedrooms).

Mr Christian Bold – **10 Trem y Rhedyn, Parc Derwen, Coity** – Conversion of a single garage into habitable living space (playroom).

Mr and Mrs Hoskins – **31 Plorin Road, North Cornelly, Bridgend** – Erect white PVCU conservatory.

UK Power Reserve Ltd – **Land north west of Coity Road, Bridgend** – Small scale standby electricity generation plant in individual soundproof containers and associated infrastructure and works.

Mr Mark Askins – **28 Gregory Close, Pencoed** – Front dormer and double storey rear extensions.

Mr Simon Eden – **7 Pant Y Blodau, Pencoed** – Detached double garage.

Mr Mark Vowles – **Sandford, Bryneglwys Avenue, Porthcawl** – Discharge of conditions 1 – 8 of P/15/48/FUL.

Mr Tony Kostic – **4 Moriah Place, Kenfig Hill** – Conversion of five bedroom dwelling to two self-contained flats, with single storey kitchen extension.

HD Ltd – **2 – 4 Wyndham Street, Bridgend** – Relax standard time condition to renew P/10/870/FUL for refurbishment, extension and new floor.

Mr and Mrs J Gibbon – **3 Woodlands Rise, Bridgend** – Demolish existing single storey flat roof garage and rebuild garage/utility room attached to property.

Mrs G Cox – **85 Glenwood Close, Coychurch, Bridgend** – Proposed two dormer windows to front elevation.

Mr R Roberts – **29 North Road, Ogmore Vale** – Single storey rear extension for kitchen and bathroom.

Mr Riggs – **1 Clos Gwaith Brics, Tondu** – Convert integral garage into a side lounge.

Mr K Patel – **Sea Breeze Apartments, 69 – 73 New Road, Porthcawl** – Change of use of redundant space into one bedroom self-contained flat.

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Pupils raise £4,000 to buy children gifts

ABOVE: The Brynteg mini-Santas load up the delivery lorry.

KIND-HEARTED pupils from Brynteg Comprehensive School, in Bridgend, became mini-Santas again this year by raising money to buy presents for other children across the county borough.

Now in its 21st year, Brynteg's 'Santa Appeal' involves all of the school's pupils participating in a range of festive fundraisers, which this year included sponsored Christmas carol-athons, raffles, and table-top sales.

The pupils raised a total of £4,000 which has been used to buy presents for 127 local children.

Brynteg's headteacher David Jenkins, said: "We are very proud of our charitable and community support over many years. This event in particular emphasises the caring, inclusive ethos of the school."

Local removals firm JH Apsee & Sons had supported the annual initiative from the start, and were on hand again this year to help deliver the gifts to Bridgend County Borough Council's social services department, from where they will be distributed to children aged from new-borns up to teenagers.

Some additional money raised by the appeal has also been donated by the school to Bridgend Women's Aid.

HIGH TIDE TIMES
(UNTIL JANUARY 7)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary. For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time AM	Ht M	Time PM	Ht M
31 Thur	09.57	8.7	10.21	8.3
01 Fri	10.39	8.4	11.10	8.0
02 Sat	11.29	8.0	11.57	7.8
03 Sun			12.31	7.8
04 Mon	01.17	7.6	13.48	7.8
05 Tues	02.31	7.8	14.58	7.9
06 Wed	03.32	8.1	15.53	8.2
07 Thur	04.22	8.4	16.39	8.6

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.

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CARDIFF CROWN COURT ROUND-UP by **AJ SICLUNA**

Benefits fraud: BRIDGEND WOMAN IS JAILED

A mother of five has been jailed for 24 weeks at Cardiff Crown Court for unlawfully receiving state benefits worth £27,210.

Deborah Edwards, 50, of Clos can Fford, Bridgend, a woman with no previous convictions, was told by Judge Jonathan Furness: "You received these benefits over a period of four years, and you knew you were not entitled to them."

She had admitted eight charges before Bridgend magistrates involving fraud, failing to indicate a change of circumstances, and giving false statements for benefits, and had been committed to the Crown Court for sentence.

Prosecutor Simon Stephenson said the offences came to light when the authorities received an anonymous call concerning the behaviour of Edwards.

He said she had been receiving unlawful benefits in respect of council tax, jobseekers allowance, and unemployment support allowance.

She claimed she had no partner, but the court heard that in 2009, her husband moved in and she failed to notify the authorities.

When interviewed, she initially denied that her husband had been living with her, but she later accepted that he had.

She said she failed to indicate this because of financial problems. Jonathan Lewis, her counsel, claimed that her husband had enjoyed some of the benefits, apart from the defendant.

"It is arguable that her husband would have known of this state of affairs."

He said Edwards had been struggling financially and currently had a significant debt into which she was making inroads.

The judge told her: "There comes a point when it has to be an immediate custodial sentence, imposed as a deterrent."

Local chef's suspended sentence for drugs offences

A COWBRIDGE hotel chef has been jailed for eight months, the sentence suspended for 18 months, at Cardiff Crown Court for drugs offences.

Jamie Davenport, 24, of Chestnut Avenue, St Athan, admitted offering to supply cannabis and possessing cannabis.

In addition to the suspended sentence, he was ordered to carry out 100 hours unpaid work and to pay costs of £400 plus a statutory surcharge of £100.

Said Judge Jonathan Furness: "There is great public concern at offences of this nature.

Prosecutor Jason Howells said two police officers were on mobile patrol in the Brackla area of Bridgend on May 14 when they saw a Vauxhall car parked near a school.

Davenport got out, and walked into a lane nearby well known for drug dealing.

Inside the car, said Mr Howells, there was a strong smell of cannabis.

Davenport was followed down the lane and was found to be carrying a number of cannabis 'deals'. He was arrested and said: "It's just possession of cannabis. Me and my mate went halves."

Further amounts of cannabis were found in the car and Davenport's mobile phone contained text messages concerning the supply of drugs "on a low level".

Said Mr Howells: "He was effectively a street dealer."

He was said to have previous convictions for assault and causing criminal damage.

His solicitor, Robert Chudleigh, urged the court to pass a suspended sentence.

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Award for 'healthy start' nurseries

ABOVE: Caroline Stradling from BCBC's childcare team, Karen Elliot – Mums Away; Kate Parry – Bridgend childcare team and healthy pre-school practitioner; Amanda Bowden – deputy manager at Chunky Monkeys day nursery and Mandy Philips – cook at Chunky Monkeys day nursery.

FOUR local nurseries have picked up an award for their outstanding efforts in giving children a healthy start to life.

The Bizzi Day Nursery in Pencoed, Chunky Monkeys Day Nursery in Bridgend, Maesteg's Little Acorns Day Nursery, and the Mum's Away Nursery based at Abercerdin Primary School, have each been rewarded with a 'Gold Standard Healthy Snack' award.

The award has been designed to raise awareness of healthy eating practices and demonstrate what can be achieved by providing nutritious snacks for children in childcare settings.

It has been developed in a multi-agency partnership with representatives from BCBC, Public Health Wales, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, City and County of Swansea, and Neath Port Talbot county borough council.

Panto-goers raise £1,105 for charity

GENEROUS families who enjoyed the *Beauty and the Beast* panto at the Grand Pavilion Theatre, Porthcawl on December 13 have raised an impressive £1,106 for local charities.

Mayor of Bridgend county borough, Coun Richard Young and Mayor of Porthcawl town, Coun David Newton Williams, attended the performance, along with representatives from the Mayors' charities.

The money was raised through a combination of bucket collections, raffle and a donation made from every ticket sold for the performance.

Guests and families were treated to a spectacular performance on the sold-out opening weekend with characters such as Dame Dorothy Do-It, Willy Do-It, Beauty, Pimple, Eugene, Enchantress and of course the Beast!

The pantomime runs until Sunday, January 3.

Rotarian's award

Alan Reeks and John Ward.

AT the Rotary Club of Bridgend Christmas dinner, president Alan Reeks presented a Paul Harris Fellowship award to Rotarian and past president John Ward.

The prestigious award is presented to Rotarians and others in recognition of outstanding service to the community and the club.

Paul Harris 'fellow awards' were originally inspired by Rotary International's founder Paul Percival Harris (1868 -1947) to recognise, as stated in the citation, 'People who have done exceptional work on behalf of Rotary in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among people of the world.'

Rotarian John Ward has been a member of the organisation for some 40 years.

In addition to holding the office of club president, he has been the club's secretary, plays an active role in all of the club's current activities, and is currently developing a significant international projec,t which will benefit from Rotary International grants.

The club had an unexpected visit from Father Christmas (Rotarian Tony Berrow), who distributed the bran tub gifts assisted by the president. **GH**

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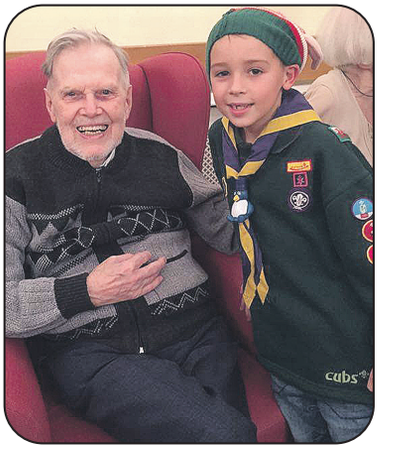

OVER the past few weeks, RMBI Albert Edward has been entertained by the wonderful children of Nottage Primary School and Nottage 1st Cubs Beavers (Panthers and Bears), and Explorers.

On December 16, the primary school choir came and performed for our residents.

They sang traditional and modern Christmas songs which residents joined in with.

The children then posed for pictures with the residents, while reminiscing about their own Christmas experiences.

A fantastic evening was had by all at the home on December 17. We were joined by Nottage 1st Cubs, Beavers (Panthers and Bears) and Explorers.

These fantastic children not only sang but many played instruments and gave fine renditions for the residents.

What a treat to see such young violinists, pianists and flautists show off their talent.

The children spent time with the residents, explaining what many of their badges were for, and discussing the Christmas party they were due to attend later that evening.

We would like to thank them all, the children and their respective organisations, for the tremendous support for the home, and for making Christmas that little bit more special for our residents. **RT**

PUPILS RAISE ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS

PUPILS from Croesty Primary School have been on patrol, reminding drivers that they should not park on the yellow zig-zag lines outside their school.

The 'School Keep Clear' markings are there to give an unrestricted view for approaching drivers and children wanting to cross the road.

Joined by teachers and a road safety officer from Bridgend county borough council, the eight pupils – who are members of the school's eco team and school council – were also presenting their own 'parking tickets' that they have made to raise awareness of the problem.

Croesty Primary School headteacher Martin Kaye said: "We're approaching any drivers who park on the zig-zags to remind them of the dangers, and to ask them to park or wait elsewhere. We've issued a handful of our homemade tickets, while being outside the school in our high visibility jackets has helped to be enough of a deterrent for most drivers."

Local PACT meetings

Maesteg Sector

ABERKENFIG/PENYFAI PACT Monday, January 2 at Smyrna Chapel at 7pm.

SARN/BRYNCOCH PACT Monday, January 2 at Sarn Life Centre at 7pm.

LLANGEINOR PACT Wednesday, January 6 at the Richard Price Centre at 5.30pm.

BRYNCETHIN PACT Wednesday, January 6 at Nazareth Chapel at 6pm.

BETTWS PACT Friday, January 16 at Bettws Life Centre at 7pm.

BLACKMILL PACT Wednesday, January 20 at Blackmill Community Centre at 6pm.

MAESTEG EAST/WEST PACT Monday, January 25 at Cwm Calon Day Centre at 6pm.

Bridgend Sector

MORFA TOWN PACT at Penybont Primary School, Minerva Street on Monday, January 4 at 6.30pm.

PORTHCAWL EAST CENTRAL PACT at Porthcawl Fire Station, Porthcawl on Tuesday, January 12 at 7pm.

MORFA WILDMILL PACT at The Community Life Centre, The Precinct, Wildmill on Thursday, January 14 at 2pm.

NEWTON PACT at Newton School Rooms, Newton on Tuesday, January 19 at 6.30pm.

OLDCASTLE PACT at The Library, Brynteg Comprehensive School on Wednesday, January 27 at 6.30pm.

BRACKLA PACT at Brackla Junior School, Brackla Way, January 28 at 6.30pm.

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BRIDGEND ROTARY RECOGNISES WORK OF LOCAL YOUNG CARERS

BRIDGEND Rotary Club president Alan Reeks attended a Bridgend Young Carers Christmas party at Pantruthyn Farm Restaurant in Pencoed.

The Rotary Club supports young carers, and president Alan and his fellow Rotarians wanted to wish these wonderful young people a very happy Christmas and to thank them for the work they do in supporting their families.

Young Carers project worker Gemma Rees thanked the Rotary Club for its donation and said that she and the staff at Action For Children help and support 45 young carers at present, in three separate age groups, by providing support groups and outings throughout the year.

These young people provide a caring role within the family home for their parents or siblings and are very deserving of any help, recognition or support that Rotary can provide them, especially during the Christmas period.

GH

The Porthcawl Lions fun run is well supported and raises total of £1,400

Organisers and sponsors of the Porthcawl Lions Boxing Day fun run.

THE atmosphere was very upbeat at the Hi-Tide as 175 runners lined up at 11am on Boxing Day morning to take part in the Porthcawl Lions annual fun run.

Luckily the weather was favourable and everyone enjoyed the exercise.

The morning raised £1,400 which will be donated to mostly local charities, so many thanks to the Hi-Tide for hosting the event, Paul Fielding for his sponsorship, and huge thanks to all those who took part in the run.

John Cosson

GEM NOTE

A full report on this event will appear in next week's GEM

Planning applications

Mr Daniel Apsee – **The Court House, 2 Derwen Road, Bridgend** – proposed new signage for tapas restaurant.

Specsavers Optical Superstores – **36 Adare Street, Bridgend** – installation of new fascia with illuminated pod logo and window manifestations.

ABA Holdings Ltd – **Jennings Buildings, Eastern Promenade, Porthcawl** – change of use of warehouse to A1/A3, D1 and 13 residential units, custom house to A1 and provide outdoor seating, car park and associated works.

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Valleys to Coast Housing Association – **The Mercies, Porthcawl** – non-material amendment to P/11/938/FUL – change 2.1m high railings with 1.8m high fence on west boundary.

Mr R George – **106 Ewenny Road, Bridgend** – first floor rear side extensions.

Mr Anthony Roberts – **18 Woodland Avenue, Porthcawl** – single storey extension to rear, detached double garage to rear garden and internal alterations.

Mr DF Hooper – **2 Heol Las, Pencoed** – demolish existing single extension, rebuild two storey side extension.

Green Renewable Wales – **Lynfi Biomass Power Station, nr Llangynwyd, Bridgend** – temporary delivery and permanent storage of up to 15,000 tonnes of uncovered clean wood chip.

NPors Limited – **Plot 119, Village Farm Road, Village Farm Industrial Estate, Pyle** – change of use to training centre for plant machinery operators and erection of 9m high scaffold tower.

Mr Ben Dommett – **Llwyniwrch Farm, Cefn Carfan Road, Heol y Cyw** – eight-berth stable block six-berth field shelter and 60m x 30m menage.

Mr Gerald Picton – **22 Locks Lane, Porthcawl** – front porch.

Christopher Lee Catering Ltd – **4A Old Bakery, Abergarw Trading Estate, Brynmenyn** – change use of part of old Ogmore Vale Bakery to café.

Valleys to Coast Ltd – **land at Heol Shon, Cefn Cribwr** – erection of six houses with associated access, parking and amenity space.

Specsavers Optical Superstores – **36 Adare Street, Bridgend** – installation of new shopfront and three air conditioning condensing units.

Valleys to Coast Housing – **land to the rear of 32 Heol Llansantffraid, Sarn, Bridgend** – erection of four two-bedroom, four person homes with associated parking and gardens (affecting footpath 33 with St Bride's Minor).

Mr Steven Carpenter – **The Cottage, Court Colman, Pen y Fai** – proposed single storey extension and internal alterations.

Mr S Middleton – **Plot 10 north of Abergarw Farm, Brynmenyn** – detached five bedroom dwelling.

Mr VS Hughes – **Plot 20, Abergarw Farm, Brynmenyn** – detached five bedroom dwelling.

Mr D Morgan – **Pant y Gibwn farm, Blackmill** – barn conversion to residential dwelling (affecting footpath 9 Ogmore Valley).

Mr and Mrs L Judd – **14 Bryntirion Close, Bryntirion, Bridgend** – new entrance porch, extend dining room and kitchen, replace flat roof with pitched and re-render external walls.

Mr and Mrs N Evans – **36 Ffordd Sanderling, Nottage, Porthcawl** – extend and re-orientate dwelling to provide additional accommodation and views of the sea, including partial demolition.

GT Developments Ltd – **Plot adjacent to 22 Queen Street, Brynmenyn** – two storey four bedroom detached dwelling.

Schoolchildren celebrate with carols

JUNIOR children from Nolton Primary School performed modern and traditional carols and songs at their Nativity concert in St Mary's Church.

The foundation phase children hosted a traditional Christmas Nativity service at Crossways Church and the junior choir performed at the Barry Town Council concert and at Rondel House Carehome.

The term concluded with Father Christmas visiting the children to give out reading books as gifts.

Roz says thank you for support

THANK YOU to all those who came and gave so generously to our coffee morning to remember Jo Wathan. We gave Marie Curie a cheque for £400.

I do hope everyone enjoyed themselves and will return again next year.

I hope all my clients had a happy Christmas and would like to wish them a prosperous and healthy New Year.

Roz Couzens, Chiropodist.

Jon Ian
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PUBLIC NOTICE
BRITISH COAL COKING PLANTS
DEADLINE - 24 APRIL 2016

The High Court has appointed Hugh James and Irwin Mitchell as lead solicitors in a group action for conditions associated with employment at coke works operated by British Coal. Specifically:

- respiratory disease
- lung cancer
- temporary exacerbation of asthma
- squamous cell skin cancer

A closing date for the group register has been set by the Court as 24 April 2016.

If you think you or a deceased family member may have been affected and worked in a coke fuel plant as a coke oven worker and wish to consider joining the group, please contact Hugh James or Irwin Mitchell by 24 February 2016 who will send you further information and assess whether you may be eligible to join the group and claim compensation.

If you instruct an alternative solicitor other than Hugh James or Irwin Mitchell, it is their responsibility to submit notice of any individual wishing to join the litigation to Hugh James and Irwin Mitchell.

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Or visit:
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Aberthin Tractor Boys fight the elements on their annual post-Christmas road run

THE Aberthin Tractor Boys held their annual post-Christmas run on Sunday, December 27.

They braved the incessant torrents of rain starting off from Talygarn, heading through the lanes of the Vale of Glamorgan, and ending up at The Bush at St Hilary for a well earned hot cup of tea.

They then made the return journey to Talygarn – wet but happy!

PHOTOGRAPHS by GLYN EVANS

OTHER PICTURES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THIS EVENT.

Pictures can be purchased by contacting:

E-Mail: ffotoimage@tiscali.co.uk
Telephone 07791 228684
www.ffotoimage.co.uk

A glimpse into 2016 at Southerndown WI

SEASONAL music welcomed members to an evening of Christmas cheer, including mulled wine and Christmas fare, at the December meeting of Southerndown WI.

More than 30 members heard president Michele, tell of the range of activities in which they can be involved during 2016.

Rhiannon, our secretary, updated us on correspondence from the Glamorgan Federation and our treasurer confirmed that our finances are in good order.

An important part of the meeting was the selection of the resolution our WI supports. Chris read out details of the eight options and a vote was held. Our result will be forwarded to the Federation for inclusion in the national Resolution selection process.

There was an opportunity to try our hand at willow work to make the basis of a Christmas wreath – ably guided by Sheila – while Christmas carols were sung.

A great programme of activities is on offer in Southerndown WI during 2016. It commences in January with a talk from a new member, Judith, on her favourite pastime of diving – and she promises to bring some of the equipment she uses!

January is the month when annual subscriptions are due; the meeting will be held on Thursday, January 14 at 7.15pm in St Brides Major Church Hall. New members are always welcome.

The committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all members – past, present and future – a joyful Christmas.

PM

Go to the **Bridgend & Porthcawl GEM** for the latest stories and breaking news

www.bridgend-today.co.uk
www.porthcawl-today.co.uk

COMMUNITY NEWS

Your local correspondent is
NANCY DAVIDGE
"Tynewydd", Llangan.
(01656) 860303
TREOES, LLANGAN & ST MARY HILL

Farewell Mr Williams!

WHAT a lovely surprise awaited the headteacher of Llangan school, Mr Steve Williams, on Thursday, December 18.

Every member of the teaching and clerical staff and special guest, former head Mary Noyes and I were present as the children played their part to the music of the ever popular film *The Sound of Music* which was shown on the screen.

Mr Williams was presented with lovely gifts, some a little unusual, but one we all thought most appropriate was a school bell which will be useful at Mr Williams' new school in Penarth.

He takes up his new post in the new year. I am sure there will be interesting inter-school activities between Llangan and Penarth in the future!

Proud great grandmother!

READERS of The GEM will no doubt have seen the picture of three young ladies who had their long hair cut to make wigs for children with cancer and other illnesses.

I understand £400 was raised in the first week. If any other reader would like to contribute to this very worthy cause go to: mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/GaryBacon/.

If you do not own a computer, please forward to my address and I will forward it on.

Local churches

ALL the local church services during the Christmas period were well attended.

And now from me, to all the readers of my weekly news, a very happy new year.

Swimmers feel the buzz as they continue a great Porthcawl Christmas tradition

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The Porthcawl Christmas Morning Swim has become a great tradition, and is a great way to clear the head before working your way through a Christmas dinner with all the trimmings.

As you can see from the pictures, everyone who made it into the water felt a real buzz and sense of achievement!

PHOTOGRAPHS by GLYN EVANS

OTHER PICTURES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THIS EVENT.

Pictures can be purchased by contacting:

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Telephone 07791 228684
www.ffotoimage.co.uk

LOOKING BACK ON A BUSY END OF YEAR AT PENCOED COMPREHENSIVE

Drama students on their trip to London.

ABOVE: Members of the school's eco-team.

Christmas events

THE last week of the Christmas term was a very busy one indeed!

A special ceremony was held to present certificates to pupils who'd sat GCSE, AS and A-level exams. It was lovely to welcome back pupils who'd left us after sixth form last year, as well as parents and current pupils.

The presentations were followed by tea and mince pies served in the canteen. Thank you to everyone concerned for making this such a lovely celebratory occasion.

A very successful Christmas concert was held in Salem Chapel again this year. The audience enjoyed every aspect of the full and varied programme, ranging from individual performances (reading, vocal and instrumental), brass and string group items as well as a variety of choral contributions.

Thank you very much to Mrs Jenkins, Mrs Smith, and Mrs Hewitt for organising the event and a big thank you also to all the pupils who took part.

The audience also enjoyed a solo clarinet item by Lloyd Coleman, a former pupil of the school, one of whose many claims to fame includes playing clarinet in the British Paraorchestra at the opening ceremony of the Paralympic Games in 2012.

We're very grateful to the Friends of Salem Chapel for allowing us the use of the chapel for the concert and the rehearsals. Thank you also to everyone for their kind donations towards school activities as collected by FoPCS who provided refreshments in Salem.

Pupils also laid on a special concert that afternoon for the school's Senior Citizens Club, members of the Llanharan OAP Club and Resource Base staff and pupils.

Before going over to Salem, everyone enjoyed a Christmas dinner in the canteen and joined in the carol singing led by Mrs Ruth Jones, Mrs Julie Howells, and Mrs Christine Lacey.

Another popular end of term Christmas tradition is the 'Big Sing' when staff and pupils come together in the sports hall.

During this year's Big Sing, £84 was raised for Shelter.

During the last week of term our year-8 geography pupils enjoyed a visit to Cadbury World in Birmingham – getting a few Christmas presents at the same time!

A number ofyear-7 English pupils enjoyed a visit to the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff to see *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*; an end of term reward for our youngest pupils who have made a happy transition from primary to secondary school.

Years 7 and 8 pupils also enjoyed an evening disco as arranged by the drama committee, raising over £200 towards the school show next summer.

Just before the end of term year-12 pupils, supported by Mrs Sharon Davies, organised a successful Christmas fair in the school's sports hall. The fair included all types of stalls and activities, ranging from cakes and refreshments to various competitions.

The fair forms part of the pupils' Welsh Baccalaureate course whereby there are different groups raising money for different charities such as MIND and Velindre Hospital. The total amount raised was £1,278.

Members of the school's sixth form Interact group continued the extremely popular tradition of producing wooden reindeer. The group, mentored by Mr Edgar Burt of the Bridgend Rotary Club, raised over £600 from the reindeer sales as well as over £200 through various raffles and other fundraising activities. The majority of the money will be donated to the 'Lil Alfie Fund'.

The annual Christmas hamper competition for registration classes was won by Mrs Hawes' year-12 class. Thank you to parents, pupils and staff for their huge generosity. Sixth form pupils delivered the hampers to the Bridgend Foodbank for distribution to families in the Bridgend and Pencoed areas.

Donations weighed over 124 kilos, providing enough food for nine families of four for three days. This initiative forms part of the Welsh Baccalaureate Community Challenge, which also saw some of our sixth formers supporting the Bridgend Foodbank in a food collection drive at a local supermarket

Sports department

SWANSEA City Community Trust recently asked Pencoed to enter two teams in Cardiff City's 'Game On' five-a-side football tournament. Fifteen year-11 pupils travelled to Cardiff City's House of Sport with their manager for the evening, Mr Thompson, where they were pitched against regional qualifiers from the rest of south Wales.

Both teams acquitted themselves well, with Team A eventually losing 1 – 0 in the overall final.

Pencoed's years 9 and 10 football teams were the last two to remain in Welsh Cup action. Both teams made it to the semi finals of the west Glamorgan qualifier; however, year-9 were beaten 4 – 1 by Maesteg and Dyffryn squeezed past year-10 3 – 2.

After Christmas, attention turns to completing Bridgend Cup games, with all teams from 7 – 10 in good positions to qualify for the finals.

Our year-11 rugby team successfully qualified for the Welsh Cup, coming second overall in the Ospreys East League. The return of senior rugby has seen seven fixtures played so far. Despite coming fifth overall in the Ospreys East League, this is a good achievement, bearing in mind that the majority of the side are only in year-11.

This put Pencoed into a qualifier against Bishop Gore from the West League. Captain Jacob Lloyd put in a man of the match performance to lead his side into the play-off final against Bryntawe.

Another major feature in the Christmas term calendar is the winter sports day. Over 400 pupils took part with great enthusiasm!

Many congratulations to the winners Llywelyn House, with Gwenllian coming second and Owain and Branwen joint third. Well done to everyone who took part that day and also in all the other sports activities and matches throughout this term.

Religious education

AS part of our PSE programme, year-7 engaged in activities for Interfaith Week. Thanks to Mrs Rees, head of RE, pupils thoughtfully considered and created a prayer room for multi-faith use. This was a great way for pupils to think about our multi-cultural society and tolerance.

In December, Miss Williams organised a visit for 20 pupils from years 12 and 13 to the Cardiff United Synagogue to visit the place of worship and to speak to the Rabbi.

Pupils had the opportunity to develop their understanding of the value and importance of the synagogue to Judaism through a tour of the building. They also had a discussion with a member of the Jewish community about various topics they have been studying, such as: kosher food laws, rites of passage, festivals, education, the different roles and obligations of men and women and the challenges Jews face as a religious minority in Britain.

The pupils had a lovely day and thoroughly enjoyed the visit. Well done to all involved!

English department

MR Evans organised another successful readathon with our year-7 pupils, raising money by reading as many books as they could in a two-week period. The total amount raised was £224.

This is another wonderful achievement and the department would like to extend thanks to everyone who sponsored the children to do some extra reading. The money raised helps seriously ill children across the UK.

Special thanks to Thomas Freeman Jones, who raised the largest amount of money and to Kira Paul who also raised a significant sum for this worthy cause. The English department started running the readathon in 2007. Since then, we have managed to raise £3,027.69.

ABOVE: The poetry group.

Mr Evans said: "2015 is a special year for the department because we have now exceeded the £3,000 target". Well done to all our supporters and readers.

In November, successful science fiction author and former Pencoed pupil Alastair Reynolds visited the school for a full day workshop with Mrs Llewellyn and our More Able and Talented (MAT) year-11 pupils. The pupils enjoyed a day of creativity, writing both fiction and non-fiction texts; excellent preparation for the demands of their GCSE exams, as well as lots of creative fun.

Supported by Miss Casson and Miss Torpey, poet Kate Williams came in to work with our year-7 and 8 pupils to develop their poetry writing skills with a number of prizes being awarded to pupils.

Congratulations to Mrs Smith and our team of three year-11 pupils who recently competed in the ESU Bridgend speaking competition. Jasmine Greene, Olivia Shellard and Jenna Dyckhoff were just pipped to the post by a visiting team from Ysgol Bryn Tawe. However, they gave a valiant effort and Jasmine won the prize for best overall speaker.

Drama department

THE drama department has had a busy first term and following a mammoth week, with record numbers of pupils auditioning for all parts, rehearsals have already begun for next summer's school production of *Back To The 80s*.

The show runs from July 14 – 16, and the department has already begun a number of fundraising events and activities. Organised by the drama committee, which is co-ordinated and led by pupils from year-7 to year-13, plans have started for a dance evening in the spring term as well as a 'Smarties challenge' which is currently underway with pupils collecting 20 pence pieces to fill a Smarties tube!

Rehearsals have also begun for this year's lower school production of *Guys and Dolls Jnr* on June 8, with transition performances for year-6 pupils also taking place. After last year's sell out performance of *Alice* this year's production promises to be a great success!

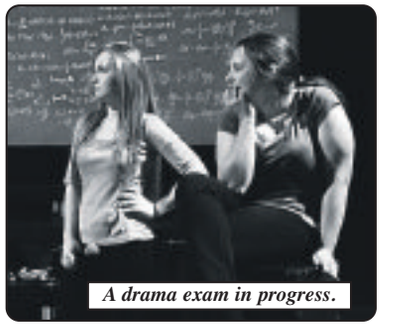
Students have performed in a GCSE performing arts showcase evening. This one night sell-out performance saw pupils performing solo items, as well as a debut performance from 'En Masse' and a high energy performance from 'Dance Club'.

Many of the exam classes are currently working on their drama practical exams and Mrs Smith and Mrs Hewitt are extremely proud and delighted with the standard of work being produced. Year-11 have recently performed their GCSE drama devised practical performance, which is 60 per cent of their overall grade and year-12 and 13 are busy rehearsing for their practical examination which takes place early in the spring term.

The drama department has recently enjoyed a two day trip to London to see the National Theatre's award winning production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* and the smash-hit musical *Elf*.

Eco team

PENCOED'S eco team have had a busy time lately working with the Field Studies Council on a project called Schools for Resilience.



A drama exam in progress.

It is a Europe-wide initiative that encourages students to tackle an issue in their local community. The areas are food waste, mobility and energy.

Sub groups of the eco team selected their focus areas and toured Pencoed armed with iPads plotting the locations of identified issues using GPS. They are now at the stage where they are debating what can be done to enhance the resilience of the community to the issues and how to deal with the issues to reduce their impacts on future generations.

Pencoed was selected as a pilot school due to its strong links with the FSC. Mr Pownall is very proud of all the hard work the students have done to date.

The eco team have also been hard at work collecting all sorts of different items that were donated to homeless people at a night shelter in Cardiff this Christmas. Thank you to all students and staff who contributed, who have made a huge difference to the lives of those less fortunate than us over the festive period.

Celebrations

CONGRATULATIONs to:

- Jessica Phillips, whose design was selected as this year's school Christmas card.
- All those who in the space of two hours raised nearly £800 for Children in Need in November. Form tutors and staff arranged a whole variety of activities for Children in Need from dodgeball to karaoke.
- Organised by staff and pupils in the resource base, a total of nearly £120 was raised in the Macmillan Coffee Morning.
- New incentives to improve pupil attendance over the last term included the Hot Chocolate Club for form groups with the best attendance and the very popular Attendance Advent calendar. Whoever attended school each day in December had an opportunity to win a prize. Some days only one prize was awarded, on other days as many as 10 prizes ranged from £20 gift vouchers to bags of sweets.
- STAR Reader has got off to a tremendous start this term with 2,616 quizzes being taken and 35,194,463 words read by pupils in years 7, 8, and 9. We have had nine STAR Readers of the Month for September, October and November.

Well done to Isabella Davies, Rhys Evans, Morgan Griffiths, Christopher Davies, William Davies and Kacie Harvey!

Also, big congratulations to our three 'word millionaires' from year-7, Isabella Davies, David Sheldon and Megan Daymond, this is a fantastic achievement. Points are earned for houses each time a quiz is passed, along with extra points for readers of the month and word millionaires. At the moment, thanks to pupils' efforts, Gwenllian leads followed by Llywelyn, Owain and Branwen.

A special thank you to Friends of Pencoed Comprehensive for their recent generous donation of £4,000 to the school. The next meeting is at the school at 5.30pm on January 6. Please come along – new faces are always welcomed!

PENCOED COMPREHENSIVE PUPILS STAY ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY

(Continued from facing page).

ABOVE: The school's choir at Salem Chapel.

ABOVE LEFT: Pupils visiting Cardiff United Synagogue.

RIGHT: Pupils supporting the Bridgend Foodbank.

LEFT: Winter sports day at Pencoed.

Bridgend call centre leader Louise in line for an award

Louise Freeman (third from right) with the other finalists in her section.

A CONTACT centre team leader from Bridgend has been nominated in the 18th Welsh Contact Centre Awards.

Louise Freeman of the international IT provider CGI has been shortlisted, alongside another eight nominees for the 'Best Team Leader' award.

Over 30,000 people are employed in over 100 hundred contact centres in towns and cities across Wales.

At 27, Louise is the youngest nominated in her category. Over her six years at the Waterton Industrial Estate-based company, she has managed teams ranging from 15 to 40 people.

She said: "I really enjoy the people side of my job. I'm thrilled to have been nominated and can't wait to share in the success with all of my colleagues on the big night."

Sandra Busby, managing director of the Welsh Contact Centre Forum, said: "Louise shows that the contact centre sector is creating promising career opportunities with clear pathways to progression. These awards are representative of the potential that a career in this sector holds."

The winners will be announced at the Welsh Contact Centre Awards ceremony at the Wales Millennium Centre on Thursday, March 3.

'Bad time for Bridgend traders' SAYS CANDIDATE

WHILE we were all celebrating Christmas and enjoying the pleasant social activities in our community, Bridgend town traders did not have a very cheerful time.

As I went around the shops to collect another batch of signed forms in support of Conservative AM Suzy Davies' petition for parts of Bridgend town centre to be opened up to traffic and parking, a few traders told me that they witnessed this Christmas the lowest level of footfall in as far back as they can remember.

While speaking with one of the shop owners on Queen Street during the weekend before Christmas, I noticed something that encapsulated the difficulty faced by visitors to the town centre.

I saw an elderly person using a walking aid to visit a shop after his car was forced to pull up behind the pedestrianisation barriers.

This observation explains why Suzy Davies' petition to scrap the excessive pedestrianisation in Queen Street, Dunraven Place and Market Street, and to allow some on-street parking in that area has generated such a positive response.

The success of the depedestrianisation campaign led the Labour AM for Bridgend Carwyn Jones to come out in support of the suggestion to scrap the excessive pedestrianisation.

However, the remaining challenge is that the Labour-run Bridgend County Borough Council is determined to use all possible red herrings to avoid the immediate implementation of this proposal.

For instance, they have decided to conduct a health and safety assessment at a cost of months, if not years, in delay.

In response to the council's decision, I would like to point out that the most successful shopping centre in Britain, London's Oxford Street, is not pedestrianised and does allow cars to go through it!

George Jabbour, Conservative Assembly candidate for Bridgend.

Weather doesn't stop swimmers!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Ian continued: "The swim is a great family event with many different generations of the same family taking to the sea. Many were in fancy dress, with a good percentage following the organisers theme and dressed as Pirates and Parrots.

"The atmosphere all around the swimmers is very special and hard to explain. I look forward each year to meeting old friends, many that I only see perhaps at the 'swim' and we exchange Christmas greetings, some times up to our waist in the sea'!"

The swim committee chairman, Nicola Willis, commented: "Once again we have been grateful to all who supported our swim and the number of people who turned up was fantastic, especially considering the wet conditions.

"Collections were made during the swim and we hope the bucket collections and swimmers' sponsorship will help us to make some generous donations in the New Year.

"Our main beneficiary this year is Porthcawl RNLI who always support the 'swim' with safety cover and who are celebrating their 50 anniversary in our town. We will also help local charities and organisations.

"As a small committee, we are delighted the way we have been supported once again this year, I would like to thank all swimmers, spectators, individuals, businesses, fellow 'Buckaneers' and organisations who help in so many ways to make the swim such a successful event in the town's calendar.

"We are delighted that this special anniversary has been such a fantastic success."

'Don't use hot water cold cure!' ADVICE FROM SURGEONS

CHILDREN as young as eight months are ending up in hospital with burns after breathing in steam for coughs and colds, only for scalding water to tip over them.

Parents are unwittingly putting their children at risk of serious injury in the mistaken belief that steam inhalation will relieve the symptoms.

In the last five years alone almost 20 children have been admitted to Morriston Hospital's Welsh centre for burns and plastic surgery after being scalded by very hot water.

One was so badly burnt a skin graft was required while another developed sepsis and was critically ill in intensive care – though thankfully the patient made a full recovery.

Now, as a result of the concerns raised by experts at the hospital, GPs and practice nurses are to be given new guidelines so steam inhalation is no longer recommended.

It follows research carried out by consultant plastic surgeons Sarah Hemington-Gorse and Dai Nguyen and consultant paediatrician Chris Bidder, who were concerned at the number of children being seen with steam inhalation-related injuries.

Dai said: "Sitting in a steamy room, such as the bathroom with the shower running, will provide some short-term symptom relief.

"But it doesn't shorten the duration of the cold and makes no long-term difference. There is no gain but there is potential harm.

"Having bowls of hot water around children is not advisable. They are unaware of the dangers and get worse burns than adults if the same temperature water hits them because their skin is thinner.

"Parents were present and supervising the steam inhalation in all the cases we looked at. But it can happen so quickly. You cannot catch a bowl of hot water once it starts tipping over."

Porthcawl parents Rachel and Gavin Denley-Ansen had to take son Finley, aged eight, to their GP surgery in Porthcawl.

Rachel said: "We thought he had hay fever. The nurses in the surgery thought it was a cold and suggested we used steam.

"We had a bowl of water which we wasn't boiling but was obviously hot, and placed a towel over Finley's head.

"His father and I were either side of him. I said, 'When you need to move, let me know'. And as I said that, Finley just moved his head and pulled the water all over his legs."

Finley, a pupil at West Park Primary School, said: "It really hurt. When I got off the chair I was in shock.

"I didn't know what to do so my dad told me to go into the shower and then they were just putting cold water over me."

Finley was taken by ambulance to Morriston where he was found to have suffered 15-20 per cent burns to his lower abdomen, groin and legs.

This required trips to theatre and a stay in intensive care before he was moved to the children's ward. However, after going home Finley became very ill with sepsis and was rushed to intensive care again.

Fortunately he has since made a full recovery, with a small scar the only physical reminder of his ordeal.

Rachel said: "My advice to parents would be never to use steam inhalation. I just wouldn't ever put hot water by the children again and I wouldn't recommend anybody else does it."

Public-spirited Filco staff help to raise £11,000 for cancer charity

STAFF, colleagues and shoppers at FILCO Supermarkets spent the year fundraising for Macmillan Cancer Support, raising over £11,000 from store collections and payroll giving to taking on the Cardiff Half Marathon, they pulled together to raise vital funds.

"Each day in Wales, 50 people will receive the devastating news that they have cancer and Macmillan is working each day towards being there for every person facing that diagnosis to ensure that no one faces cancer alone," said Amy White, fundraising manager for Macmillan Cancer Support, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan and Caerphilly.

"The fantastic fundraising by FILCO staff and customers is invaluable to Macmillan Cancer Support. Without them, and other fundraisers, we simply could not provide the support and services we do to people affected by cancer.

"I want to say a big thank you to FILCO from everyone at Macmillan Cancer Support and on behalf of everyone we support each year.

"No-one should have to face cancer alone. The support from our fundraisers, and the team at FILCO, helps us be there for people and their family when they need us most.

Jeanne Davies, administration manager, FILCO Supermarkets said: "We are very pleased to have helped such a worthy cause as Macmillan and know that every £pound raised by the FILCO team will be put to good use."

For information or support relating to cancer, call Macmillan's Support Line on 0808 808 00 00 (8am to 8pm Monday to Friday); or visit www.macmillan.org.uk

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CLEARANCE EVENT NOW ON IN STORE.

News in and out of class at Barry Comprehensive

Conor, Callum and Tyler with their Kindle readers.

STUDENTS and their families joined staff and governors for Barry Comprehensive School's annual Christmas carol service at St Mary's Church, Holton Road.

The service combined songs and music performed to the music department's high standard, along with readings delivered by students. The large congregation joined in enthusiastically with the traditional and modern hymns.

We would like to thank everyone who made this very enjoyable festive celebration possible.

In It To Win It Christmas 2015

CHRISTMAS came early for some lucky boys in years 7, 8 and 9. The now famous Barry Comprehensive School 'In it to win it' draw took place on the last day of term for the expectant students. Raffle tickets were accumulated since September, with tickets being awarded for effort in class, excellent behaviour and high attendance.

Three lucky pupils gained the star prizes of Amazon tablets, with others winning selection boxes and other assorted goodies. The 'In it to win it' draw was introduced to promote high standards throughout KS3 and the next draw will take place on the last day before Easter.

Of course, only boys on Santa's good list could obtain the tickets! The more tickets, the more chance you have of taking away a prize. So we will pass the baton to the Easter bunny, with all boys having a chance to win next term. Remember if they're in, they can win!

Children's gifts

EVERY year, students and staff at Barry Comprehensive collect gifts to take to the children's hospital in Cardiff.

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Edward and Owain delivered Christmas presents to the Children's Hospital.

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Cloudy2Clear service the Vale, Bridgend, RCT and Porthcawl areas and Phil is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. *'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'*

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CHALLENGE, YES, BUT OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS FOR THE VALE IN 2016...

VIEW FROM THE VALE

by Coun **NEIL MOORE**
Leader of the Vale of Glamorgan Council

I WRITE my final column of 2015 on the cusp of a New Year, and one that will be very important for the future of the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has just published its 'Draft Corporate Plan', which sets out our vision for the next four years, along with our medium term financial plan.

Residents can find and comment on the draft corporate plan, along with our budget proposals for next year, via our website, but just to be clear, neither document will be finalised until Vale residents have had their say and a decision is taken by the full council meeting sometime in the first quarter of 2016.

It is now clearer than ever that the Vale Council will be a very different organisation in four years' time from what it is today.

We estimate that the council will have to save at least £18m over the next two years, and could well have to find the same amount in the two years that follow.

It will inevitably have a reduced workforce and many of our services will be delivered in very different ways.

I do not, however, see a totally bleak picture when I look ahead to 2016 and the years beyond. We must see it as an opportunity for the council to radically change the way in which it works and take the opportunity to collaborate with others and look at alternative ways of providing an even higher quality of service to Vale residents.

Our renewed 'corporate vision' is a Vale of Glamorgan which is defined by 'Strong Communities with a Bright Future' as set out in the draft corporate plan and is reflected in our budget proposals for next year and beyond.

The financial barriers being placed in front of us by central Government are unprecedented, but there are 127,000 people who live in the Vale, all of whom rely to some extent on our services.

I believe that they should expect the Council to deliver the highest level of service possible within the resources at its disposal and that is what we aim to do. Most importantly, I believe that the council that I lead is more than capable of doing just that. This belief is not based on blind optimism, but is based on the evidence that I see every day in the work undertaken by the incredibly hard working staff. The last 12 months have seen a series of fantastic achievements that demonstrate exactly what a special place the Vale is in which to live, work, appreciate and enjoy.

Schools in the Vale achieved their best ever exam grades this year. Llantwit Major Comprehensive School's GCSE results were the pick of the bunch with a 14% improvement on 2014's results, along with Barry Comprehensive and Stanwell Comprehensive who also obtained their best ever grades.

And it wasn't just the pupils celebrating in Penarth. The Vale of Glamorgan team of officers, who were behind the Penarth Learning Community project, scooped no fewer than seven awards in the first year since its opening. The same team are now constructing a new learning community for Llantwit Major, so we may not have to wait too long to see more accolades for their work.

Elsewhere in the Vale, 2015 saw a long running regeneration project come to fruition. The transformed Barry Island pulled in TV cameras, as well as record crowds this summer, as people flocked to stroll along the rejuvenated promenade, enjoy the new features and manicured backdrops, and make their trips to the seaside even more special by hiring the new beach huts.

This project has also been recognised as one of UK's best examples of regeneration. I have no doubt that this, plus the events programme that saw the resort shortlisted for a national tourism award, were big factors in attracting the potential development that could soon commence on Nell's Point, although we still have our fingers crossed!

The scale and quality of what has been proposed for the former Butlin's site is clear evidence that the resort is back on top, and along with the rejuvenated fun fair site, gives confidence that an all year round tourism and business destination is viable at Barry Island.

This regeneration on the Island, and the surrounding development of the Waterfront are examples of how much can be achieved when organisations across the public and private sectors work together effectively. Partnership working will be the means by which we overcome the challenges that we face in the coming years and the Vale Council is fast becoming one of the best local authorities in Wales in this regard.

Our social services team was commended by the Chief Inspector for Social Services in Wales in 2015. One of the secrets to their success was working effectively with others in the care sector. Their most notable achievement within integrating health and social care realised radical reductions in waiting times, has drawn plaudits from Government Ministers, and has doubtless improved many lives. The potential to build on this success bodes well for the future.

Many of you may be reading this after a brisk stroll, working off a turkey sandwich or two. If so, you may also have just visited one of the parks that have this year been applauded for their cleanliness. I am very proud to say that the Vale Council ends 2015 with more 'green flag' parks than ever before.

This is yet another example of how more can be done with less and of how we can find alternative ways to improve what we do while making the required savings.

I could continue to list the number of ways in which the council has this year worked harder than ever to support the communities that we all want to see thrive, but the truth is that I could write all day and would still end up missing something out.

What is important, and what these examples make clear, is that the council has an excellent track record of delivering top quality services on a limited budget. Indeed, the council was this year ranked as the top performing local authority in Wales despite receiving one of the lowest levels of funding for each of our residents.

I have represented Cadoc ward as a local councillor since 1988 and can honestly say that the financial pressures that we are now under have made 2015 one of the most challenging years I have ever known.

However, looking back on all of the progress that has been achieved and the obstacles that have been overcome, I can also say that it has been one of the most rewarding.

As we enter 2016, I am proud to live in a Vale of Glamorgan that is thriving, welcoming, and characterised by a sense of community that is as strong as ever.

This is not down to politicians like me, but to you, the residents of the Vale of Glamorgan, many of whom also form our workforce, who make it a reality. I know we can continue to work together to build an ever better future for the Vale of Glamorgan.

I wish you all a peaceful and happy new year.

Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.

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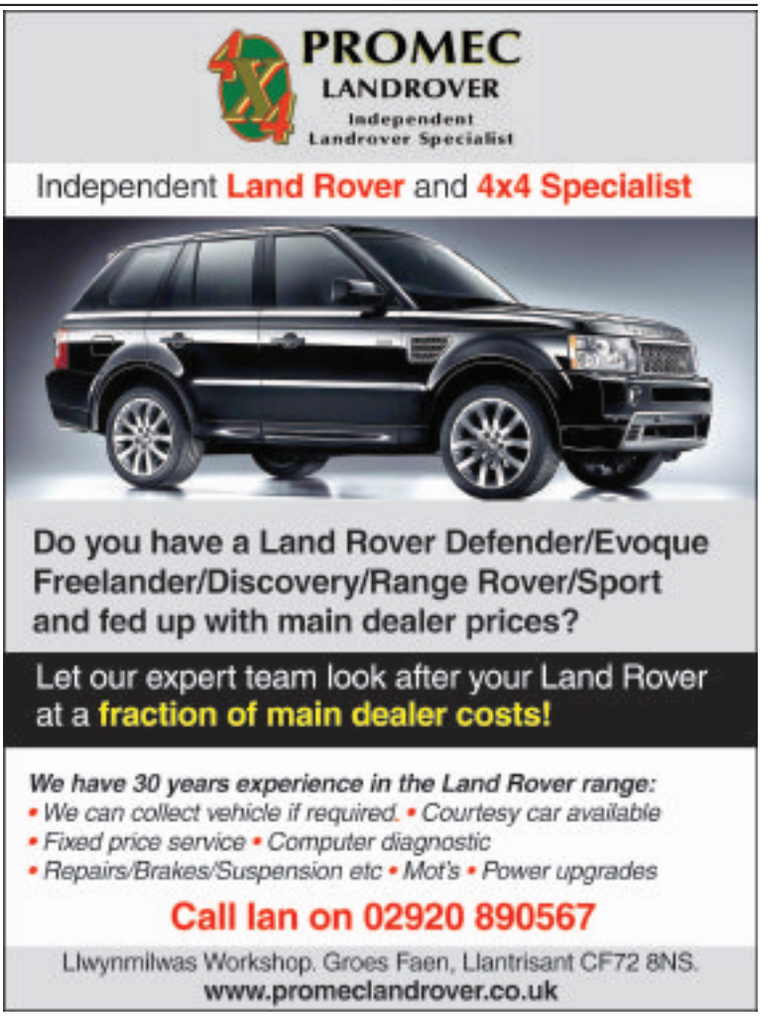

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The Candylion may be bonkers – but it's bonkers in a good way!

ABOVE: Remy Beasley (right) with Dyfan Dwyfor. Photos by Farrows Creative/National Thatre Wales.

Gruff Rhys, Matthew Bulgo and Dyfrig Morris.

JUST how do you describe National Theatre Wales' family Christmas show, *The Insatiable, Inflatable Candylion*?

Officially, it's a theatre gig, with the musicians assembled by Gruff Rhys constantly on stage, and the action taking place around and alongside them.

You could call it an allegory, with a message about the pernicious effect of inequality on society, and on how important it is to share things fairly.

My guest called it "bonkers" - but she meant it in a good way.

National Theatre Wales prides itself on doing things differently, and the production team have transformed the indoor cricket school at the Swalec Stadium into a surprisingly intimate venue.

The audience is in the middle, the majority standing, with the band and cast on a raised stage running all the way round them. The children are encouraged to gravitate to the front, and from where I stood, they seemed to me to be following things closely – always a good sign.

There is plenty to keep their attention, because Gruff Rhys is a good old-fashioned tunesmith. You could imagine him in the old days of Tin Pan Alley, churning out hit tunes for a series of lyricists.

The actors have plenty to do, and they grab the kids' attention in a series of eccentric roles, and the young audience will learn plenty about stagecraft from the cast. There's a great scene featuring Matthew Bulgo, playing Caruin (half carnation and half penguin - don't ask me to explain, please).

He sets off on a long journey through water, ice and burning desert, with two actors holding a backdrop and producing a series of props to illustrate his trek. Funny enough, I think, to make all ages laugh.

What's the show all about? Well, Tim Price, who has some serious credits for writing TV shows such as *Y Pris* and *Caerdydd*, has been drafted in to work on the plot, but I think in reality he was there to write those knowing lines that go over the children's heads but get a smile from the grown-ups.

For instance, Remy Beasley, who is excellent in the title role, becomes a megalomaniac dictator at one stage. She appears on the balcony above the audience, Eva Peron style, declaring "There is no Alternative". Bit of politics there, as Ben Elton used to say.

To return to the question of how do you describe *Candylion*, I think the best parallel might be The Beatles' *Yellow Submarine*. That was a story with a plot that no one remembers, but with goodies and baddies, and all driven along by excellent tunes.

Is it in competition with the pantos? I don't think so, because it does have the USP of a great live band who are smart enough to do more than just play – they contribute to the show in many areas, and Gruff Rhys himself has a good line in dry, understated humour. He delivers a lot of those lines intended for the grown-ups.

A fun night, with plenty to make you smile and music to make you tap your feet.

The show runs until January 2 at the Swalec Stadium, Sophia Gardens, and the box office is 02920 371 689.

PHILIP IRWIN

JOY OF CHRISTMAS AT SCHOOL CONCERT

CAN I pinch an inch or two of The GEM to say 'Diolch yn fawr' to Mrs Andrew and all the foundation phase staff and children of Ysgol Gymraeg Sant Baruc.

I recently had the delight of watching the foundation phase Christmas concert and it was an absolute delight.

The level of performing skills was very high indeed (and that is a professional opinion, in my previous life I was head of drama in a Swansea comprehensive school).

I was particularly impressed with the children's speech skills – not a microphone in sight but the audience heard every word.

A beautiful retelling of the Bible story of the Nativity that was full of the joy of Christmas.

Diolch yn Fawr to all who contributed.

David Alexander (Amelie's Bampi).

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HOWARD'S SEA VOYAGE HAS SPECTACLE BUT LACKS THE EMOTIONAL PUNCH...

by GARETH JAMIESON
Follow Screen Talk on Twitter – @GEMScreenTalk

WHEN Chris Hemsworth isn't wielding his hammer as part of the Marvel universe, he's showing a pretty impressive ability to pick good projects.

Showing up in the likes of *The Cabin In The Woods, Rush* and *Vacation*, Hemsworth has shown a versatility that is pretty unexpected, and re-teams with his *Rush* director Ron Howard on *In The Heart of the Sea*.

Hemsworth plays Owen, first mate to the whaling ship *The Essex*. When the boat and its crew (numbering among them Tom Holland, Cillian Murphy and Benjamin Walker) are attacked by a mammoth whale, the men are left shipwrecked and struggling to survive; pushed to their limits, will they be able to live long enough to return home...

'Man versus Nature' is a story as old as time, especially when it comes to the big screen. While there have been adaptations of 'Moby Dick', the real events that inspired that tale has never been brought to bear (let alone made into a film).

While it could have been easier for Ron Howard to simply make a 21st century retelling of Herman Melville's story, going for the (supposed) fact behind the fiction arguably makes for a more compelling, richer story – although in reality, what it does is play out as Moby Dick with a degree more savagery and with the added ingredients of human ego battling out among the wild seas.

Using the framing narrative of Melville (played by Ben Whishaw) talking to one of the now-older survivors of the ordeal that befell the *Essex* ship (embodied alongside Whishaw, in the main thrust of the story Tom Holland), we are taken into a world of whale oil trading, where fortunes are being made and competition is fierce.

It's easy to see this early part of the film play as comment on the society of today, where big business takes the driving seat and pushes the limits of behaviour, especially when it comes to plundering the natural world and those in it, and to be fair this is where Howard's film shows that it has intent on being more than just a creature feature.

Sadly, this part of the film plays slowly and as we go out to sea, awaiting the arrival of the big whale, the film tends to tinker along, dripping with dialogue heavily seasoned with sea salt and characterisation that feels familiar.

It's when we get into the heart of the sea that the film finally clicks into gear, firstly through a well-executed sequence that sees the crew tested by conditions, and then tested by the beast that haunts the boat.

Howard's direction picks up the pace and the film transforms into a blockbuster (the effects are well-realised) and then a fight for survival as the shipwrecked men battle to stay alive.

It's these moments that give the crew the best chance of getting deeper into the material – Chris Hemsworth is at home playing alpha-male, leader-of-men-types, and this is exactly what he is here; while his sharp interactions with the captain of the ship he is essentially babysitting, played by Benjamin Walker, aren't given anywhere near enough time to grow, the relationship bubbling over rather than boiling.

And that is the film's main, and overwhelming, bugbear – while it draws you in, you never get deeply enough into the characters to ever feel anything for them. You're watching them rather than feeling anything for them, and even when they are at the end of their sanity, the connection never really sparks.

It's a film that looks great, has its moments, and labours over the point of man and his hubris being the cause of all that goes wrong on this trip (rammed home with no little subtlety by slow close-ups of some characters post-whale kill) but it never truly engages you. You'll take a trip to the *Heart of the Sea* – but while Ron Howard draws you in physically, you're never there emotionally.

VERDICT – Man struggles to survive against nature; a story heard before, and one *In The Heart Of The Sea* doesn't really offer anything new on. It's a big, epic looking film, but it doesn't grab your heart, and it's that inability to create a connection that makes it a by-the-numbers offering. Average.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: ***Jaws* (1975), *The Perfect Storm* (2000)**

Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D910.

● **£2,000:** 980188.

● **The rollover, which was £3,500, was not won.**

● **£10:** 898313; 554229; 473063; 941388; 230807; 968581; 838844; 496537; 850683; 179825; 338615; 402874; 934996; 592925; 112623; 680511; 317415; 396064; 475.

● **£5:** 150038; 718780; 770359; 959283; 278826; 793814; 255057; 730462; 103434; 686710; 443168; 227044; 209804; 748755; 470495; 189265; 431646; 795961; 473905; 708970; 709965; 178803; 256462; 368767; 397076; 299110; 907070; 207775; 483200; 619361; 586472; 682230; 496019; 341868; 862794; 231961; 417729; 301095; 680889; 490158; 152310; 872669; 488224; 597011; 262586; 353960; 734470; 256354; 216578; 905347; 690877; 564818; 828353; 307668; 164994; 132754; 1344; 476; 1383.

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D911.

● **£2,000:** 1187.

● **The rollover, which now stands at £4,000 was not won this week.**

● **£10:** 965110; 980195; 664798; 851886; 272335; 252411; 244740; 405733; 508229; 517469; 754824; 172350; 216192; 722449; 799351; 289162; 829576; 317214; 379796; 450678.

● **£5:** 424754; 737039; 435156; 437502; 792634; 814517; 708650; 863105; 418065; 396564; 397076; 569932; 191710; 815366; 855303; 327294; 717366; 678739; 112550; 595287; 898219; 997006; 904327; 639553; 495927; 245497; 387227; 773660; 524966; 710625; 960899; 703852; 642027; 472761; 955435; 441960; 121037; 217112; 147270; 625690; 412754; 898285; 735739; 830193; 134198; 281136; 858923; 314097; 413970; 311405; 452797; 645899; 405023; 217549; 793100; 188485; 389816; 822664; 1515.

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Poppy collection hits a new high in Cowbridge

THE organisers of Cowbridge's Poppy Appeal were delighted to learn just before Christmas that funds raised this year had jumped by 20 per cent!

The money collected from appeal boxes in shops, schools, banks, pubs etc. and from the street collection points has hit a high point of £13,489.

David Howell, Cowbridge Poppy Appeal organiser, said: "I must say thank so many people for this fantastic collection.

"Thanks go to the public of Cowbridge and the Vale for their wonderful generosity and support, the organisations and businesses who accepted collection boxes and collected on our behalf – and the volunteers who manned collection points, sometimes in the most dreadful weather, and who actually collected over 60 per cent of the total.

"I must also say a very big thank you to the staff of Lloyds Bank, Cowbridge, who counted the donations for us. Our good fortune meant a lot of extra work for them, for which I am very grateful."

He added "I would also express my gratitude to Andrew Davies, the town clerk at Cowbridge Town Council for organising the Remembrance Day parade; Russ Barnett, the parade marshall, for running the day so well; those who purchased wreaths to commemorate the occasion; all the groups that took part; and the organisations and people who supported the successful event on the day.

"These donations, when added to additional income from other sources, means that we have already exceeded last year's record figure and are set to exceed £17,000 for 2015.

"I believe this clearly demonstrates the support by the public for our servicemen and servicewomen and the donations will be put to very good use.

"Thank you once again to everyone concerned."

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Joanne 01446 404897

Tuesdays 6:30pm
The Old School, South Road, Sully CF64 5TG
Nicola - 01446 740394

Wednesdays 6:00pm
Cadoxton Methodist Church, Church Road, Barry
Joanne 01446 404897

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Annamarie 01446 736534

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Gladstone pupils bring joy to local residents

The infants school choir, staff, Jane Hutt AM and Eric Hands, chair of residents' committee.

The nursery children put on a lovely play.

Junior school choir, staff, Jane Hutt and Eric Hands.

RESIDENTS of Golau Caredig extra care housing scheme in Barry had an early festive treat recently when over 100 children from Gladstone Road Primary School visited to stage a Christmas concert.

Pupils from the nursery school delighted the audience with a song-filled Christmas play which was followed by a selection of songs and carols from the infant and junior school choirs.

The visit to the scheme signals the start of what it is hoped will be a very meaningful relationship between the school and residents.

Headteacher Caroline Newman explained: "We were so pleased to be able to bring the children along to perform and they can't wait to come back in the New Year to meet the residents' committee. Our plan is to develop regular events throughout the year to give everyone young and old, the opportunity to share stories and experiences, have fun and learn from each other."

Eric Hands (81) chair of the residents' committee, said: "The concert was absolutely brilliant and the children did a great job in entertaining us. Social involvement can get harder as you get older or if you have health issues but events like these help everyone feel part of the local community.

"They are especially nice for those who don't have family or friends close by or who may not be able to get out and about. We were also pleased that Jane Hutt our local AM was able to join us."

The committee formed in July and is going from strength to strength. They were very grateful to secure a grant from Age Cymru and have been very busy arranging social activities.

Eric explained: "The school concert was just one part of our Christmas extravaganza! Next we welcome Barry Brass Band to Golau, we've organised a coach trip to see the Christmas lights in Cardiff, Barry and Penarth and we're also going to the pantomime."

Golau Caredig is the Vale of Glamorgan's first extra care scheme. Located in the centre of Barry, the iconic glass-fronted building provides much-needed affordable independent living accommodation for people over 55 in the form of 42 purpose-built one and two-bedroom flats. Individual care and support is provided via an in-house domiciliary care and tenant support service.

Tenants have access to a comprehensive range of facilities including a restaurant, hairdressers, laundrette, communal lounge and IT suite, plus a full programme of regular activities to help them stay active and healthy.

The scheme, built in partnership by Hafod Care Association and the Vale of Glamorgan Council, opened in October 2014.

To find out more about Hafod Care visit www.hafod.org.uk

Jan Read with Treacle, the Text Santa pup.

Puppy walker Jan so proud of young Treacle!

GUIDE dog puppy Treacle is only seven months old, but she's already a celebrity!

The pure black Labrador was one of a handful of pups to be named by the viewers of ITV's charity appeal, Text Santa. Other festive choices were Twiglet, Waffle, Hollie, Cocoa and Ice.

Treacle is undergoing her first year of training in Tre-dodridge with puppy walker Jan Read: "She is very bright and picks up instructions quickly. We have travelled by train and bus, and been shopping in B&Q and Marks & Spencer. We were among All Blacks fans in Cardiff on match day and she coped really well.

"She goes to puppy class in Llangan and is so laid back for her age. She executes all the moves, and looks straight into your eyes as if to ask what to do next."

Jan became a puppy walker for Guide Dogs after the death of a beloved pet. She said: "We've always had retrievers and when the latest, Phoebe, passed away, I decided I didn't want to lose another dog and go through that upset again.

"I have had three lovely Guide Dog puppies, one after the other, each beginning with 'T'. Tabitha, a yellow labrador, is qualified and working as a guide dog in Northamptonshire. I knew from day one that she would make the grade.

"Tweedie, a German Shepherd, is in advanced training in Cardiff and now I have Treacle, who is a real character. None of the puppies has been destructive. They don't have time to get bored."

She said people often ask her how she copes when the puppy leaves for advanced training. "I was upset on the day Tabitha went, but when I visited her at the training school a few months later, I could see her allegiance had moved on," she said. "She gave me lots of hugs and kisses, but all the time she was looking out for her trainer. It was a form of positive closure."

Meanwhile, Jan has found a novel way of raising money for Guide Dogs: "My husband Simon and I went over to Hensol golf course and collected balls that had been lost on the course," she said. "We sold about 200 to different people and gave the £20 proceeds to Guide Dogs. The worst bit was washing each one with a nail brush!"

To raise money for Guide Dogs, or to find out more about becoming a puppy walker, ring Steve Kersley on 07785 907728.

Club benefits from Christmas donations appeal

LOCAL children's swimming club Barry Beavers were chosen to receive a donation of 50 Christmas gifts this year, as part of the St David's Cardiff Toy Appeal.

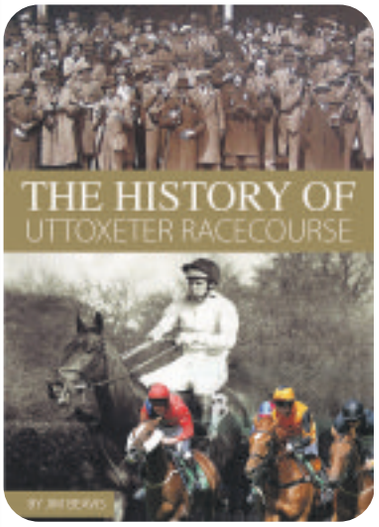
In December, shoppers were invited to buy an extra Christmas gift for a child in need, and drop it off at the St David's Donation Station. A team of helpers made sure all gifts were delivered safely in time for Christmas. The generosity of Welsh shoppers saw donations pass 4,000, the original target for the appeal, to a total of over 5,200.

Barry Beavers is open to children of all abilities, and provides a fun and friendly environment for children to learn to swim confidently.

Steven Madeley, general manager for St David's, said: "We are so grateful to our generous customers who have not only helped us hit our ambitious target, but surpass it."

ON AND OFF THE TURF WITH BRIAN LEE

Dick Rees – loved the sauce, but a great jockey



RACECOURSE historian Jim Beavis, who has written books on Bath, Fontwell and Brighton racecourses, has now added another book to his growing list.

It is The History Of Uttoxeter Racecourse, published by the author at £15.45 (including postage & packing) and can be obtained by writing to him at 70 Aylesford Avenue, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 3SD or by e-mailing him at jimbeavis@hotmail.com.

Jim, who is also researching a book about Windsor racecourse, can claim to have visited every racecourse in the country and quite a few abroad too! He enjoys visiting Fontwell and Brighton because he knows he is bound to come across some friendly faces.

The people he says he admires most in horse racing are the stable staff who he says: "Do all the dirty work, come rain or shine, working long hours for not much money."

Stories about the many great trainers and riders can be found in The History Of Uttoxeter Racecourse – characters such as Terry Biddlecombe, Jenny Pitman, Stan Mellor, who married a Vale girl, David and Martin Pipe, Richard Dunwoody and Welsh riders Carl Llewellyn and Hywel Davies and, of course, some of the not so famous.

However, perhaps the most famous celebrity to visit the course was Doctor Samuel Johnson (1709-84), writer, poet, critic and compiler of the first English dictionary which set a standard unsurpassed for 150 years.

Meanwhile, in Jim's The History of Fontwell Racecourse, he tells the tale of the famed Welsh steeplechase jockey Dick (Fred) Rees: "The large holiday crowd on June 8, 1927 saw Dick Rees fall at the last from *Ferdia*. The horse broke its neck and the jockey had a compound fracture of the right knee.

"Although it was not made public at the time, Dick had been drinking. He had been severely reprimanded by the stewards of the National Hunt Committee for having been found drunk by the Hexham stewards when riding there.

"He was regarded as the best jump jockey between the wars, winning the Grand National on *Shaun Spadah* in 1921 when everything else fell, the Cheltenham Gold Cup three times, and becoming champion jockey five times in eight years. His score of 108 winners in 1924 was a record for 28 years. He had good hands, presented his horses at the obstacles supremely well, and was strong and stylish."

In Jim's The History Of Bath Racecourse, his version of the *Francasal* ringer scandal of 1953, (in which Cardiff bookmaker Gomer Charles was involved) is of great interest. Charles was shot dead outside his Park Place house in Cardiff in 1966 and I recall seeing two policemen outside the house when walking home in the early hours of the morning after my stint on the Western Mail.

All of Jim's books are well illustrated and I hope he can be persuaded to compile a follow-up to Pat Lucas's excellent Fifty Years of Racing at Chepstow, which was published by H G Walters, Tenby, in 1976.

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Youth project's Christmas feast!

THE Cadoxton Youth Project hosted a Christmas meal event as a result of successful funding provided by Dish Out Dosh (Glamorgan Voluntary Services).

The Christmas meal took place at Cadoxton Methodist Church on Tuesday, December 15. Over 85 people attended and were treated to a turkey or pork meal with all the trimmings.

Vale AM Jane Hutt attended and presented cheques as a result of fundraising to Marie Curie, Ty Hafan and Barry Beavers Club.

Rita Limbrick, the organiser of the event said: "It was great to see the children enjoying themselves, making and decorating Christmas cards and having fun with local partners such as Barry Communities First, the Vale Youth Service and the Big Learning Company."

There were several prizes given out to children who made Christmas cards and they were able to choose prizes donated by the Toy Fair. Father Christmas also made an appearance and handed out selection boxes to the children and posed for photos.

The year 2016 promises to be a busy year for Cadoxton Youth Project, with the regeneration of Victoria Park and Main Street and the opportunity for children living in Cadoxton to get involved with the Cadoxton Community Project.

Pupils remember those less fortunate

ON December 18, Rhws Primary School held its seasonal Presents for Charity day, when the children donated gifts in their hundreds for those less fortunate than themselves.

These were delivered to the NSPCC at the annual Rhws Lifeguards Community carol concert in aid of the charity.

Cookie-decorating, face painting... AND SANTA ARRIVED WITH GIFTS!

MORE than 300 children attended the Vale Council-led Barry Communities First Christmas party held in partnership with Legacy Leisure, Newydd Housing Association and the People Centre at Barry Leisure Centre on December 22.

A host of activities included cookie-decorating, holding animals with the Nearly Wild Show and face painting. Father Christmas also came to visit and handed a free selection box and photo to each child.

Hazel James – event co-ordinator said: "It was an amazing event and we're really happy that so many people came.

"All of the feedback has been positive and we're looking forward to doing it again next year."

Contact 01446 709432, or visit www.BarryCommunities First.org.

Cadoxton WI holds a festive get-together

ON December 21, Cadoxton (Barry) WI held its final meeting of the year.

It was a really festive night and one to remember. Five guests were welcomed.

The short agenda presented by the president reported that the coffee morning at the civic offices raised £400 for Marie Curie and £40 for Cadoxton School Nurture Project.

Several forthcoming trips were discussed. The Christmas Elf distributed the Secret Santa gifts and then members indulged in a delicious buffet.

The entertainment was provided by Graham Rush, who sang a medley of songs and the atmosphere was terrific.

He ended with a selection of carols, which brought the evening to a close. Raffles were donated by the committee and there were numerous winners.

It was a wonderful finish to a very successful year. The committee would like to thank all the people who came to our meetings, members and speakers.

Meetings are held every third Monday of the month, 7pm at Victoria Park Community Centre. Contact 01446 404891.

CW

Songs, dancing and a buffet!

HIGHLIGHT Park Women's Institute started the month with the craft group going to the Beech Tree for their Christmas meal, followed by the Tuesday afternoon meeting.

This went well, with a few quizzes, mince pies, s cakes and tea! At the evening meeting, members were entertained by Changing Scene theatre group with carols, songs and dances.

A buffet was later supplied by committee members.

Members meet in Highlight Park Community Hall on the first Tuesday of the month at 2pm and on the third Tuesday at 7.15pm.

PW

Children score festive triumph

THE children at Y Bont Faen Primary won warm plaudits for their Christmas concerts: the juniors performed the musical, *Simeon* and the foundation phase presented a play entitled *The Curious Sheep*.

The parents and teachers thought the children were brilliant: Miss Jones, the year-4 teacher, reported: "It was absolutely awesome, the children rose to the occasion and sang their hearts out."

It was a busy period for the Y Bont Faen Primary choir. They began the week singing outside Waitrose in Cowbridge and collected a magnificent £81, which they intended to donate to charity.

A year-4 member of the choir said: *"We sang each song twice and it was a bit nerve racking, because lots of people were looking at us"*.

The choir also sang at the Carols by Candlelight service at Ramoth church on Sunday and were also entertaining the residents of Long Meadow court.

Camera club signs off with a competition

BARRY Camera Club's monthly programme started on December 4 with a talk from Rob Mitchell, entitled 'The Cliché Trap'.

This explained how it is possible to avoid the mistake of simply regurgitating common themes in photography by taking a fresh view on even the most commonplace subjects in landscape, portrait and still life photography.

This requires some creative thinking on the part of the photographer which always presents a problem, particularly to those of us who are more schooled in the art of 'camera club photography' than photography itself.

On December 11 there was a presentation of members' images.

Due to the Christmas break, this month concluded early on the 18th with a competition night. The judge, Fred Davies, was very complimentary of the overall standard of the work, which had made it difficult to score.

He decided to make awards as follows:

Monochrome print: 20 points and first place went to Roy Carr for 'Steetley Pier; second place and 19 points, Glenn Porter for 'On Target'; third place with 18 points, Glenn Porter for 'Morning Fishing'.

Colour print: First prize and 20 points went to Mike Lewis for 'Wild Field Poppy'; second place and 19 points went to Sarah Savage for 'Seen'; third Roy Carr, 17 points for 'Monknash Sunset'.

The **projected image** section was, as usual, the most contested: the winner with 20 points was Roy Carr with 'The Burren'; Tina Haydon took second place, 19 points with 'Tulip'; and in third place on 18 points was Glenn Porter, with 'Good Morning, Penarth'.

Barry Camera Club wishes all GEM readers the very best for the New Year! We resume on January 8.

The club meets every Friday from 7pm to 9.30pm at St Francis Millennium Centre, Porth-y-Castell, Barry Garden Suburb, Barry, CF62 6NX.

See more information on the website at: www.barrycameraclub.co.uk

Five stars for Cafe No 5!

CAFE No 5 in Barry's High Street has been awarded a five-star food hygiene rating by the Vale of Glamorgan – it is the third year running the cafe has achieved highest standard.

Steve Thomas of ValePlus, which runs the cafe, said: "This is a vindication of all the hard work by the staff all through the year."

The cafe offers training to adults with learning difficulties hoping to move into regular employment.

Go to the **The GEM** for the latest stories and breaking news...
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Remember miners' fortnight in Porthcawl? Could 'Sausage Dog Day' take its place?

The were plenty of puzzled Porthcawlians around Coney Beach last weekend, as 'sausage dog' owners from far and wide descended on the town.

It all started on Facebook, and organisers said they were amazed at the response.

Similar events are likely in the future.

Images by **ANDY WICKS**
Telephone 07855 374478

Little and large!

Jenner Park children put on a fine Christmas show

Year-1 elves' party.

Christmas star makers.

AFTER a few weeks of practicing and learning their lines for a Christmas show, Jenner Park pupils enjoyed performing for the parents and staff in Barry.

The school thanked parents for supporting the children by providing their costumes.

Local company has Christmas foodbank gifts for homeless

THE Jehu Group helped the homeless at Christmas with a special foodbank appeal to support the Llamau charity.

Llamau work with homeless young people and women providing 'quality support from dedicated support workers.'

Food collection boxes were placed on all Jehu Group sites across south and west Wales, as well as in the company head offices in Waterton Park, Bridgend.

Bernie Mark, Jehu corporate social responsibility and training co-ordinator, who helped organise the collection said: "The response from our staff and subcontractors on site has been brilliant.

"We were pleased to have been able to generate such a positive response to support this worthwhile charity, knowing that all of the donations will be going to support homeless people in south Wales."

Vale village enjoys its Christmas market!

PHOTOGRAPHS by **IAN DIXON**

IN the run-up to Christmas, the village of Peterston-super-Ely held its annual festive market in the church and community hall.

There was plenty of entertainment – with choirs singing carols, handbell ringers, a 'Santa' bran tub – and there was also a veritable feast on offer, washed down with copious amonts of coffee and mulled wine.

The general opinion of the residents who crowded into the village hall was that it was a magnificent start to the Christmas festivities!

'WE HOPE RECENT MEMORIAL SERVICE BROUGHT COMFORT AT A SPECIAL TIME OF THE YEAR'

ON November 21, we brought the community together to remember and share memories of loved ones at a special Christmas memorial service.

This year the service was held at St Mary's Church, Holton Road, Barry and was officiated by Father Ben Andrerws and Father Chris Seaton.

There was an amazing contribution from a local young lady Llinos Haf Jones, who provided an emotional interlude as she sang 'Fields Of Gold'.

We would like to thank everyone for their support and attendance; St Mary's church members for their help with the refreshments, especially the mince pies which have been very popular over the years at past services.

Also we wish to thank Llinos Haf Jones and her parents for their support over the years.

Finally our thanks to a good friend Dean Caldwell for his help with the provision of sound equipment for the service.

It was an overwhelming and emotional service, attended by around 250 people, and our way of giving something back to the community and letting people know that we don't forget them or their loved ones.

After the service, families and friends were invited to add their messages to the Memorial Tree which was kept at St Mary's as part of its Christmas Tree Festival.

We hope that the service brought great comfort and send our best wishes, thoughts and prayers to everyone.

Lyndsay and Nicola Ellis

www.valefuneralservice.co.uk

Messages remembering loved ones decorated the memorial tree.

Public can help shape iconic designs on Heritage Coast

VALE residents are being invited to help shape the designs for four iconic new sculptures along the Glamorgan Heritage Coast.

These will mark key entrance points to the area, as part of an ongoing initiative to raise the profile of the destination to visitors and residents alike. While their exact locations are yet to be finalised, it's likely they'll be situated at roadsides in Ogmore, St Brides Major, Llantwit Major and St Athan.

Artist Howard Bowcott, a specialist in large-scale public artworks, has been commissioned by Creative Rural Communities to create the sculptures. Initial concept designs show large fin or sail-like shapes made from layers of locally-sourced stone that will represent the cliff strata of our coastline.

Local residents can help shape the designs by attending one of two public consultations, where they can meet the artist, view the initial designs and offer their thoughts on what makes the Glamorgan Heritage Coast special. Howard will also be hosting consultations with local school pupils.

The public consultations will be held on January 18, 6pm – 8pm at St Bridget's Church Hall in St Brides Major; and January 19, 10.30am – 12.30pm at Llantwit Major Town Hall.

Coun Lis Burnett, cabinet member for regeneration, said: "We hope that local residents will enjoy being part of the design process and will have a real sense of pride as the sculptures are unveiled later in 2016. The Glamorgan Heritage Coast is a great asset in the Vale of Glamorgan and these features will really highlight the area as something special."

Volunteers break for festive lunch!

VOLUNTEERS who help maintain Porthkerry Country Park have given the site its final pruning of 2015.

A Vale Council spokesman reportee: "After a morning of cutting, lopping and burning last week the 'practical conservation' volunteers sat down for a hard earned Christmas lunch. The group who help keep much of the park's greenery healthy were joined in their festive celebrations by some of the other groups who help make the park such a popular attraction."

Also in attendance were the Porthkerry Wildlife Group, who help monitor and survey the wildlife of the park and gardening volunteers creating a wildlife - riendly garden around Nightingale Cottage.

Mel Stewart, site ranger at Porthkerry Country Park, said: "We are so lucky to have a fantastic group of volunteers who help make a huge difference to the park. Having everyone together highlights just how many people give up their own time to maintain a site that is enjoyed by so many.

"We really appreciate their help and hard work and it's great to be able to thank them with a little celebration – even if the sausage rolls were a bit burnt!"

Anyone interested in volunteering at Porthkerry, or any of the other countryside sites around the Vale should contact the ranger service on 01446 733589 or email countrysidevolunteers@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk<mailto:countrysidevolunteers@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

FREE TAX HELP

TAX Help For Older People (TOP) will hold a professional advice surgery to older people on a restricted income at Roz Couzens' Chiropody Surgery, Unit 4, Commercial House, Commercial Street, Llantwit Major CF61 1RB on Monday, January 4, from 10am to midday.

No appointment is necessary. The TOP helpline can be reached on 0845 601 3321, or 01308 488066; home visits can also be arranged.

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Family Notices

BUNN
Julie Alison (née Cornwell)

Suddenly on 16 December, Julie Alison (Née Cornwell) of Palmerston Road, Barry. Dearly loved wife of John. Sister of Janet and aunty to Jeffrey and Daniel.

Julie will be sadly missed by all of her family and friends.

Resting at A.G. Adams & Son Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry until the funeral on Thursday, 7 January. Service in the chapel at 10am, afterwards cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Port Road East, Barry.

Family flowers only, if desired donations may be handed to the funeral director after the funeral for Dogs Trust.

EASTERBROOK
Colin

Peacefully on December 26, Colin, most dearly loved husband, father and grandfather.

Funeral service at St John the Baptist Church Llanblethian, on Friday, January 8, 2016 at 11.30am, followed by interment. No flowers by request.

HOCKING
Charles Stanley *(Charlie)*

Peacefully after a long illness at UHW Cardiff on December 9, Charlie, aged 85 years.

Beloved husband of the late Serena, much loved dad of Clive and daughter-in-law Tracey, adored grandad to Rhys and Sian, great granddad to Chelsea, Georgia and Jack.

Charlie will be sadly missed by all his family and friends.

Resting at A.G. Adams & Son until the funeral service in the chapel of rest on Friday, January 8 at 2pm, followed by Committal at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium. Family flowers only, donations in lieu if so desired for The Alzheimer's Society c/o the funeral director.

WILLIAMS
Robin

(Of Cowbridge and of the South Wales Echo)

Peacefully in his sleep at the Princess of Wales hospital. Dearly loved husband of Brenda. Dad to twin sons Paul and Julian, daughter-in-law Shelly and fiancé Julie. Bampi to Jess, Abi, Zoe, and partners Tom, Robert and Stephen. Great bampi Rob to Jayden, Elijah and Imogen.

Will be truly missed for his outrageous fun and laughter.

Funeral service at Barry Crematorium on Thursday, January 7, 2016 at 2pm. Bright colours please.

Family flowers only, donations in lieu may be sent to Cardiology Department, University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff.

HARRHY
Richard David

Very suddenly on 14 December, Richard of Llantwit Major. Cherished husband of Susan and loving father of Matthew and James. Respected father-in-law of Rebekah and Sarah, and a much loved grandfather.

Resting at W.A.Brown & Son, College Street, Llantwit Major until the funeral service on Tuesday, 5 January 2016 in St Illtud's Church at 2pm, followed by interment at Boverton Cemetery.

Family flowers only but donations may be made to CAVRA c/o the funeral home (cheques only please).

TAYLOR
Gerald

After a short illness bravely borne, Gerald of Llantwit Major and formerly of Llandow. Treasured husband of Vivienne and a dearly loved father of Martin, Lee and Nick and a much loved grandfather and greatgrandfather.

He will be sadly missed by all.

Resting at W.A.Brown & Son, College Street, Llantwit Major until the funeral service on Monday, 4 January 2016 in Coychurch Crematorium at 2.45pm. Family flowers only but donations may be made to Cancer Research UK Cymru c/o the funeral home (cheques only please).

AUSTIN
Enice Mair

Passed away peacefully at the Princess of Wales Hospital on December 21, aged 83 years. Beloved wife of Bill. A very loving mother of Alun, Leighton, Philip and Meryl. A proud nanny to her six grandchildren and also great nanny to her seven great grandchildren. Loving sister of Margaret and the late Eirlys. Mair will be sadly missed by all of her family and friends.

Funeral service at Coychurch Crematorium on Friday, January 8, 2016 at 2.45pm. Strictly no flowers. Donations in lieu may be given to MND (Motor Neurone Disease Association) PO Box 246, Northampton, NN1 2PR or Cancer Research Wales, Velindre Hospital, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF14 2TL. A special thanks to the staff of Ward 4 and AMU, Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend.

WATKINS
Ronald

Peacefully at Holme Tower on 19 December, Ron, aged 89 years. Beloved husband of the late Gwyneth, much loved dad of Stephen and Donna, adored gramps and pappy to Richard, Katherine, Nataly and Grant, great grampy to Megan.

Ron will be sadly missed by all his family and friends.

Resting at A.G. Adams & Son until the funeral service in the chapel of rest on Tuesday, 5 January 2016 at 10am, followed by committal at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium. Family flowers only, donations in lieu if so desired for Marie Curie Hospice, Penarth c/o the funeral director.

CHURCHILL
Lillian May (née Bobbett)

Suddenly passed away on December 20 in Princess of Wales Hospital, Lillian of St. Athan. A much loved mother, grandmother and great grandmother, who will be sadly missed.

Resting at W.A.Brown & Son, College Street, Llantwit Major until the funeral service on Monday, 4 January 2016 in St. Tathan Church at 10.45am, followed by cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Memorial Park Crematorium at 12 noon. Family flowers only but donations may be made to British Heart Foundation c/o the funeral home (cheques only please).

DAVID
Frances Joan (Frankie)
(Née Twigg)

Peacefully on December 22, after a long illness at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend. Frankie of Mallory Close, St. Athan. Dearly loved mother of Fabian, Damian and their partners Angela and Katie. Cherished grandmother and great grandmother.

Frankie will be sadly missed by all of her family and friends.

Resting at A.G. Adams & Son Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry where flowers may be sent until the funeral on Thursday, January 7. Service in the chapel at 1.45pm, afterwards cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Port Road East, Barry at 3pm.

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'Taffy' spins a tale for PoW patients (with help from his daughter Aster)

ONE of the UK's top storytellers has been spinning some seasonal tales for patients at Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend.

Taffy Thomas visited as part of ABMU's Arts in Health programme, and had musical support from his daughter, Aster.

Although he lives in Cumbria, Taffy has Welsh roots. He trained as a literature and drama teacher, and founded two theatre companies.

After a major stroke at the age of 36, he turned to storytelling as a self-imposed form of speech therapy, which turned into a new career.

Taffy was awarded the MBE in 2001 for services to storytelling and charity and became the first Laureate for Storytelling in 2009.

He delighted stroke patients on Ward 2 and youngsters on the children's ward – along with staff and families – with his storytelling skills.

ABMU arts in health coordinator Prue Thimbleby said: "Taffy was able to empathise with the stroke patients. He shared true stories from his own experience, as well as fictional stories chosen to give hope and encouragement through difficult times.

"On the children's ward, youngsters of all ages enjoyed his riddles, his wonderful storytelling coat and the Christmas stories.

"It proved a really good distraction for those waiting to go to theatre."

Literature Wales also arranged for Pont publishing to donate free books for all the children.

Catherine Roberts, head of governance and patient experience at Princess of Wales Hospital, described having a visit from the UK's first Laureate for Storytelling as a great honour.

She added: "I have spoken to the patients and their families about the visit. Some of the patients are receiving speech therapy and to hear about Taffy's experience and hear his stories was entertaining and inspiring.

"It was very generous and kind of him to give his time and the event was enjoyed by staff and patients."

Team take to the road

The Cowbridge roadshow.

DURING the run-up to Christmas, Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) took its services to Cowbridge, Llantwit Major and Saint Athan.

The aim was to meet as many local voluntary organisations as possible and for the local voluntary organisations to meet the GVS team.

The three events were well attended, with people braving the recent December storms to meet the GVS team to find out more about GVS services and how GVS can support local voluntary organisations.

Commenting on the events, Clive Curtis of GVS said: "We were pleased that so many local groups came to see us. In each venue, we were able to provide advice and information on a range of subjects, including funding, governance and volunteering.

"GVS experts were also on hand to answer questions or concerns on all aspects of volunteering and voluntary action. Building on the success of these events, we will be taking our services out again to various parts of the Vale of Glamorgan in the New Year.

"It is important that we make our organisation and our services as accessible as possible, by going into towns and villages the length and breadth of the Vale." **MS**

Strong season so far for the Llantwit Major under-15s

The team in action.

ABOVE and BELOW: Llantwit Major under-15s.

LLANTWIT MAJOR RFC finished 2015 with a storming 33-0 win at home to arch rivals Barry.

The 2015/16 has seen the team progress a step further. After a great start defeating Taylwain and Bargoed on the road the boys didn't perform and lost against Cowbridge.

Since the loss against Cowbridge the team has gone from strength to strength by recording nine wins to finish the year off in style.

Cefn Coed felt the wrath of the Cowbridge loss when Llantwit recorded a 64-0 win at home and dedicated their win to the late, great Lyn Dolman.

Next up Llantwit beat St Josephs, Pyle, Denbigh and Gilfach Goch just to name a few, but 2015 will be remembered for the victory at home to Penarth.

Having lost 42-0 the previous season to Penarth the result proves and shows how far the team has progressed. Penarth were four points ahead with one minute left to play when Iwan Robinson-Booth crossed to win the game.

Both in attack and defence the team has matured from boys to young men. They have worked hard in training and the new faces within the squad have given a refreshing uplift in both determination and confidence.

We want to take this opportunity to thank the squad and their parents for their continued support. I want to also thank my fellow coaches Kerry Williams and Alan McInnes for their time also.

We host Rhiwbina on January 10 and hope in 2016 the squad can continue its climb and keep the wins rolling and start adding more funds for our under-16s tour.

We have a few places available if anyone is interested in giving rugby a go. For more information, please contact coach Kris Pilcher 07557128861 or team manager Brian Henson 07976874741.

Squad: Dominic Henson, Brandon Hughes, Tyler chandler-Haines, Ieuan Harford, Cameron Sims, Rhys Roberts, Connor Treadgold, Dylan Carroll, Mason Richardson, Callum McInnes, Owen Hodge, Jos Harris, Dan Manfield, Gregor Harris, Liam Padmore, Ellis Harding, Liam Palmer, Owen Evans, Corley Doster, Dylan Chamberlain, Iwan Robinson-Booth, Luke Birnage (c), Dylan Holloway.

KP

Bridge Club takes on a festive air...

Rory, Eileen, Roger, Betty winning the Barrie Robinson Salver.

PORTHCAWL Bridge Club captured the festive spirit with a traditional 'Win A Turkey' night – a handicap pairs event for a turkey prize at Magness', the local butcher – won by Eileen and Jeff.

Following this, the club held its annual Christmas party for the Barrie Robinson Salver. This was run as 'mystery teams' – pairs didn't know their team-mates until the final board of the event.

After a splendid meal, with plenty of wine, Eileen, Rory, Betty and Roger took first prize and the salver.

Results:

Thursday, December 3: First, Keith Davison and Tony Haworth; handicap, Connie Dick and Janet Richards.

Saturday, December 5: First, Colin and Hazel Heard; second, Janet Richards and Trish Saunders.

Thursday, December 10: First, Terry Dolan and Roger Plant; handicap, Eileen Mahoney and Rory Gibbons.

Saturday, December 12: 'Win A Turkey Night' – winners (handicap), Eileen Mahoney and Jeff Barnett; scratch winners, Trish Saunders and Pat Cogbill.

Thursday, December 17: Barrie Robinson Salver – first, Roger Plant, Betty Longley, Eileen Mahoney, Rory Gibbons; second, Keith Davison, Tony Haworth, David Rance, Alwyn Hill.

The club meets twice a week on Saturday and Thursday at the Awel-y-Mor centre, 7pm – 10.15pm. Visitors welcome. To contact the club, call our secretary Trish – 01656 785794.

TH

Vale bridge results

RESULTS for the Vale of Glamorgan bridge club for December 21:

1st Steve Burgoyne & John Evans 63.75%, 2nd Mike Best & Kevin Maddox 62.73 %, 3rd Irene Thomas & Graham Jones 57.95%.

Pictured above are John Henson and Geoff Tinkler, winners of this year's annual Claret Cup competition, accepting their trophy from chairman Graham Norris.

LE

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www.llantwit-major-today.co.uk
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www.porthcawl-today.co.uk

Competition for golf club's junior players

AN end of season Christmas competition for the boy's golf team at St Andrew's Major Golf Club was organised by the club's professional, John Hastings, recently, with an additional prize for the most original and funniest hat.

A skills competition which included longest and most accurate drives, short game and putting challenges were set, with the winners of each competition awarded with chocolate prizes which were consumed on the spot!

It was a really great way to round off the 2015 season which has seen a big all round improvement in each of the juniors' golf games and all the boys had a wonderful time.

The fun and games finished in the clubhouse where one of the club's staff judged the funny hat competition, the winner being Harry Dawson who made a Morris Dancer-style creation complete with club tie!.

JH

The Kenfig Hill seconds hold on for friendly win

IT was never going to be a day for running rugby when Kenfig Hill seconds took on Maesteg Celtic seconds in a friendly at Garth Park.

On a heavy pitch which had suffered with recent heavy rain then both sides struggled to play with any continuity.

Celtic took advantage early on with strong driving play from their forwards which eventually led to a try from a driving lineout which wasn't converted.

There was no further score in the first half from either side although Kenfig Hill went close on a number of occasions with the final pass just not going to hand.

In the second half Kenfig Hill managed to string some passages of play together and finally managed a score from their top try scorer this season, prop Dan Dryden, which wasn't converted.

Kenfig Hill had their tails up playing most of the game in the Celtic half and scored again with fly half Mathew Burnell stepping inside and going over for a score which was converted by full back Michael Rawnson.

Celtic came back strongly and went over again from a driving maul in the final few minutes. However, the conversion was missed and Kenfig Hill held on for a 12-10 win.

Chris Leyshon and Gethyn Bassett were the pick of the Kenfig Hill forwards and several youth players also performed well.

DHD

Boxing day double for Evan and Adam

TRAINER Evan Williams and jockey Adam Wedge teamed up to land a nice little double at Wincanton on Boxing Day.

The first leg was initiated when six-year-old King's Odyssey, a 10-3 chance, beat the odds-on favourite Southfield Vic by three and a quarter lengths in the Harry Dufosee Novices' Chase, and in the closing Open NH Flat race, four-year-old My Liege, a 5-1 shot, finished a length and a quarter ahead of Chelsea Flyer.

Sunday's rained off Coral Welsh Grand National will now be staged on January 9.

BRIAN LEE

Barry and District tables

CRIB DIVISION 1:

West End 8, Wyndham Cons 7; Moors Boys 12, Liberals 3.

League table - Wyndham Cons 87, Liberals 86, West End Runaways 84, West End 83, Cadoxton Cons 75, Rhoose Social 72, Moors Boys 68.

SKITTLES DIVISION 1:

Sea View B 6, Rhoosters 1; King William XII 1, Rhoose Social B 6; Slammers 6, Liberals C 1; Rhoose Social C 2, Rhoose Social A 5; West End D 7, Cambrian Flyers 0; Liberals A 2, Rugby Club 5; Barries Boys 2, West End C 5.

League table: Sea View B 64, West End D 52.5, Rhoose Social B 48.5, King William XII 46.5, Rugby Club 46.5, West End C 43, Slammers 40.5, Allsorts 35, Barries Boys 34.5, Liberals A 32.5, Rhoose Social A 32, Rhoosters 31.5, Rhoose Social C 26.5, Liberals C 24.5, Cambrian Flyers 23.

SNOOKER DIVISION 1:

Savoy A 5, CaddyAllstars 0; Rhoose Social C 2, Cadoxton Cons Z 3; Rhoose Social B 1, Harbour B 4; West End C 2, Wyndham Cons A 3; Penarth Cons B 3, Market Street C 2.

League table: Savoy A 52, Harbour B 49, West End C 38, Wyndham Cons A 37, Cadoxton Cons B 32, *Cadoxton Cons Z 29, Rhoose Social C 26, Rhoose Social B 23, Penarth Cons B 19, Caddy Allstars 18, Market Street C 18.

SNOOKER DIVISION 2:

Cadoxton Cons A 2, Market Street B 3; Savoy B 3, Sully Sports A 2; Liberators 5, West End B 0; Penarth Cons A 3, Wyndham, Cons C 2; Services Social B 3, West End A 2.

League table: Liberators 44, Services Social B 42, Penarth Cons A 37, Market Street B 36, Savoy B 34, Cadoxton Cons A 31, Wyndham Cons C 31, West End A 25, Sully Sports A 24, West End B 20, Wyndham Cons D 16

(* = points deducted)

All league & cup fixtures and results at www.barryleagues.co.uk and on Facebook - search for 'barry leagues'.

JW

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Barry Beavers' swimming coaches receive awards

Courtney Rogers, Layla Rogers, Sarah Davies and Chris Economides receive their awards from the MP.

A GROUP of Vale swimming coaches have been presented with certificates to mark the completion of the nationally-recognised Halliwick Foundation Course.

Courtney Rogers, Layla Rogers, Sarah Davies and Chris Economides received their awards at Barry Leisure Centre from the Vale MP, Alun Cairns.

The Halliwick Foundation runs courses for swimming coaches who work with people with disabilities. Chris Economides and other coaches are at Barry Leisure Centre every Saturday, providing expert teaching techniques to swimmers of all ages with a range of disabilities.

Mr Cairns said: "It is testament to the dedication of these volunteers that the highest standards of swimming skills have been recognised by the respected Halliwick Foundation. I have seen at first hand the effort, expertise and dedication from everyone at Barry Beavers – the recognition in the wider community is well deserved."

Evan's Ffos Las hat-trick

LLANCARFAN'S Evan Williams is in unstoppable form. The 'Welsh Wizard' gave his followers plenty to smile about at Ffos Las on Monday when he repeated his hat-trick of the previous year scoring with *Pobbles Bay* (8-1), *Clyne* (2-1) and *Prime Venture* (4-1).

Then, 24 hours later at far flung Catterick, his only runner at the meeting, *Poulanassy*, ridden by Adam Wedge, beat the odds-on favourite *Captain Bocelli* by one and a quarter lengths in the novices' hurdle.

Adam Wedge also rode *Pobbles Bay* and *Clyne* while Conor Ring was aboard *Prime Venture*. Debra Hamer, who hails from the Vale, was successful with *Supreme Bob* at Ffos Las in the same race she won the previous year with *Magical Man*.

BRIAN LEE

Good year for PG10

PG10 Coaching is celebrating another record-breaking season, with thousands of junior players taking part in football activities.

The FAW and UEFA 'fun football' accredited football provider, which is also affiliated to Premier League club Everton FC, has development centres in the Vale, Swansea and Pencoed, and provides coaching and sport opportunities for children and young people of all abilities, aged between four-17 years of age.

Many famous sporting names have supported PG10 this season, and junior players have also met star players from Real Madrid, Everton, Barcelona and Chelsea such as Iker Casillas, Sergio Ramos, Isco, Cesc Fabregas and many more.

With more opportunities being planned for 2016 it certainly is a exciting time to be part of PG10 - to get involved with PG10 please email petegriff10@hotmail.co.uk or visit www.pg10coaching.co.uk.

PG

International football honours for Vale girls

THREE players from a local female club 'Vale Ladies & Girls FC' received international recognition recently, attending a three day Wales national under-15 team camp.

Anais Trinci, Grace Horrell and Jasmine Rowley were all selected for the get-together, which sees the most talented female players at their age group come together for training camps based in Cardiff and Newport, run by staff at the Welsh Football Trust.

On the final day, the girls played a friendly match against a local boy's academy team, running out 4-0 winners with Horrell grabbing two of the goals.

This is fantastic recognition for three players that have worked very hard over recent years and just shows the opportunities that now exist for female players in what is becoming a hugely popular sport for girls.

Vale Girls chairman Luke Williams commented: "It is fantastic to see players that have been members of our club from the very beginning back in 2012 progressing onto the international stage at junior level.

"All three of these players have shown determination to get to this level and hopefully this gives them a taste of a possible career in the senior game one day.

"Our club has quickly developed into the largest female setup in Wales in just over three years and we have a large number of talented players who will hopefully go on to achieve similar recognition in the future."

The club currently have over 230 female players from age seven through to its senior ladies teams, who operate as Barry Town Utd Ladies following the two club's partnership that started in the summer.

The partnership has already been seen as a huge success for the female club with training sessions and matches taking place on a weekly basis at the newly installed all-weather 3G pitch at Jenner Park Stadium.

"The new playing surface at Jenner Park has provided us with the best training facility in the area, as well as being able to get matches played during the difficult winter period.

"The partnership with Barry Town has taken the club to the next level of development as we aspire to become a major force in the game over the next few years," Williams added.

To find out more information about the club or to find out how to get involved please visit the club website at: www.valegirlsfc.co.uk.

LW

Barrivale bridge

LATEST results from Barrivale Bridge Club for December 15:

1st Mark Roderick 74.44 per cent; 2nd Peter Millar 62.38; =3rd Maurice Wuetherick 60.00 and Mick Green 60.00. Dave Thomas won on handicap.

New members are always welcome at Barrivale. A partner may be arranged if required. If you would like to join, telephone 01446 418380 or 01446 733425 or 01446 735592 or call at the Pioneer Hall, Beryl Road, Barry on Tuesdays at 7pm.

DR

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Griff Davies is tackled by a Newcastle Emlyn defender. PICTURES BY GLENNSPORTS.

Bridgend Athletic slip to disappointing defeat at strugglers

Lewis Evans looks for an opening.

UNFORTUNATELY, before their largest crowd of the season at the Bridgend Brewery Field, Bridgend Athletic served up their most inept display of the season and were well beaten by fellow strugglers Newcastle Emlyn by 40 points to 5.

The tone was set in the first minute when the Athletic were penalised at a line out, giving Newcastle Emlyn's wing Daniel Davies the opportunity to open the scoring.

From the restart Emlyn were themselves penalised, but the Athletic's kicker, Lewis Evans, pulled his kick wide. In the 10th minute the Athletic's defence was sliced through and although they halted the break just in front of their posts they were penalised and Davies extended the lead to 6-0. A third Davies penalty followed as the Athletic were regularly transgressing.

Athletic centre Lewis Evans then broke from inside his own half only to misjudge a final scoring pass to wing Rhys Ward Jones, allowing Emlyn to break away on the counter attack and only desperate defence kept out the visitors.

On the half hour the Athletic were awarded a penalty inside the Emlyn 22. Lewis Evans took a quick tap penalty and was halted just short of the try line.

A series of drives were rewarded when captain Sean Williams twisted and turned out of a tackle to cross near the posts. Unfortunately, Evans pulled his third kick wide of the posts and instead of leading 13-9, the Athletic found themselves trailing 9-5. Worst was to follow as from the restart, Newcastle Emlyn gained possession and created an overlap for centre Steffan Evans to cross wide out to put his side 14-5 ahead at the break.

The second half saw the Athletic have their use of a stiff breeze. However it was the visitors, with attacking rugby from deep inside their own half, aided by poor tackling, who crossed for two tries from Teifion Davis in the first seven minutes of the half to open up a 26-5 lead.

The Athletic had little to offer in attack and it was no surprise when late in the half Emlyn, who were causing panic amongst the Athletic backs, crossed for two further tries from wing Daniel Davies. He added both conversions for a match haul of 25 points

Athletic wing Rhys Ward Jones nearly crossed in the closing minute, but put a foot in touch as a tackle came in while crossing the try line.

This win closed the gap between Newcastle Emlyn and the Athletic to three points, when the home fans were looking for a 12 points breathing space prior to the game.

The back row of Sean Williams, Griff Davies and Stuart Edbrook and scrum half Jake Williams tried hard throughout, but lacked support from most of their fellow players.

The Athletic now face two away games at Glynneath and Beddau before returning to the Brewery Field on January 19 to face promotion hopefuls RGC 1404.

The coaches must restore confidence in the team before these fixtures – let's hope this game was a little too much festive cheer affecting the performance! The club would like to thank Mr Huw Tudor of Mair's B&B for sponsoring the fixture.

AB

INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL STARS VISIT CYNFFIG SCHOOL

WELSH international basketball players from the Cardiff Met Archers team recently visited a girls' basketball festival at Cynffig School.

Welsh players Emily Stradling and Chloe Richards helped with the coaching, with fellow Archers players Azeb Smalley, Judit Fritz and Beth Jones also visiting on the day.

Girls from Coleg Cymuneddol Y Dderwen , Cynffig, Porthcawl and Maesteg Comprehensive schools took part in the festival, which was set up to get more girls active and involved in a sport they may not have necessarily tried before.

The festival was arranged by Bridgend County Borough Council's Active Young People Department as part of the Girls' Network, a group which was set up to promote physical activity and exercise among young girls.

Cowbridge under-13s battle Barry RFC in game that survived the rain

THIS fixture last Sunday morning between Cowbridge RFC under-13s and Barry RFC must have been one of only a few to take place, given the preceding week's rainfall, but the Barry pitch was in a very playable condition, though the second half did turn into a bit of a mud bath for all.

Action from Cowbridge under-13s' game against Barry RFC.

Both sides were keen to play, with Barry opening the scoring with a quick, kick-and-chase try that caught Cowbridge napping. A further well worked try from one of the opposition's big, fast running centres saw Cowbridge quickly trying to reassert their defence and counter attack, into the strong head wind.

Cowbridge drove play to the Barry line with excellent approach work from the dominant Cowbridge pack, who through good power play, came away with a try from close range by Lucas Reid, well supported by Will Clark at second row, after some close range sniping by scrum half Jack Riley.

With the wind behind them in the second half, Cowbridge again pressed forward, but they were hit by two well-worked breakaway tries by Barry, both of which were excellent 70-metre run-ins after well executed turnovers.

Regrouping, Cowbridge pressed again, and this time strong running prop forward Max Hall, with great pace and determination, shrugged off several would be tacklers to run-in from 15 metres out and score a well-worked try, after good approach work by Rhys Williams at No 8.

Ten minutes later, he did a repeat performance, to claim a brace after a scrum against the head. Harry Whitaker landed a tricky conversion that skimmed the cross bar, for the extra points.

Pushing for another try, close to Barry's line, Cowbridge spilled the ball and the strong running Barry centre scored a superb 60 metre solo try, again pushing the Cowbridge defence out wide.

The game finished shortly after, 30-17 to Barry. The final score reflected a split performance from a dominant Cowbridge pack and the fast paced, strong running centres of Barry.

TD

Squash club get set for second half of season

COWBRIDGE Squash club have just completed a very successful first half of the season with two teams promoted after winning their division.

The Cowbridge A team, captained by No 1 player, Nick Guard, topped the South Wales Division 3 East. The team of Guard, Jon Bisson, Garfield Leask, Simon Payne and Niall Sloan all contributed well to the team and Niall Sloan went through the first half of the season unbeaten.

The Cowbridge B team were also promoted by winning the South Glamorgan Division 2. The team lost only two of their 12 matches and there were not many individual defeats.

Captain Richard Ford went through the season unbeaten with 11 wins. The regular team included Charlie Graddon, Julian Jenkins, Richard Ford, Chris Ranger and Dave Matthews.

The Cowbridge C team struggled in the second half of the league campaign because of a series of untimely injuries to the top three players and unfortunately the C team were unable to avoid relegation to South Glamorgan Division 3 for the second half of the season.

The team was captained by Richard Kyte, and the regular squad included Paul Reynish, Tony Steele, James Burnett, Alan Parker and Gian Bianchi.

In January, for the first time in the history of the squash club, a Cowbridge D team will enter into the South Glamorgan Division 3.

Hopefully this will give the opportunity to many new members to play competitive team squash, and it will also provide an opportunity for some promising juniors to play competitive team squash.

If anyone is interested to join Cowbridge Squash Club club, please contact the membership secretary, David Garnham at davidjohngarnham@gmail.com.

RF

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